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[THE EVIL INFLUENCE.]

THE GIPSY PEER; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

CHAPTER IV.

What need the bridge much broader than the flood?

The fairest grant is the necessity; Look, what will serve is fit. *Shakespeare.*

"I wish to speak to you," said Lady Florence. At these words Tazoni lowered his axe till its huge head rested on the ground, and turned.

For a moment he stood motionless, statuesque, in the glory of his youth, strength and manhood. His labour had moistened his brow, and a mass of rich golden hair clung in feathery luxuriance to it. The muscles of his perfectly formed arms stood out like the sinews of a lion, and his clear, serene eyes met hers as those of an equal might have done, fearlessly, almost admiringly. Then, when that moment had passed and he had drunk in a precious draught the vision of her calm, highbred loveliness, he bared his head and said, in his musical, low-pitched tones: "I am listening, my lady."

Lady Florence, for her part, had been looking too, and, though unconsciously, to the full as admiringly. She could and did appreciate all his beauty and his strength, and it was with something like a start that she said, in response to his respectful acknowledgment of her opening words:

"Before I saw you yesterday I saw one of my grooms giving a pair of ponies to one of your men to break in."

She paused; Tazoni inclined his head.

"I followed him," she continued, watching him closely.

But Tazoni had schooled his facial muscles, and taught them obedience to his will in lieu of slavish dependence upon his feelings, consequently Lady Florence could detect nothing of the bitterness that was eating at his heart on his handsome face.

"I followed him," she repeated, "because I feared

that they would be stolen, and I valued them very much; they were a present from my father, and I should not like to lose them."

He inclined his head again; not a word of reproach as yesterday.

Lady Florence grew astonished at the change and almost impatient. But in her heart of heart the calm, proud, beautiful daughter of an earl wanted to hear the gipsy speak.

She broke the silence.

"Come closer, please," she said, imperiously, "I cannot speak so loud without trouble."

Axe in hand, he drew near, until she could have touched him with her whip.

"I am sorry now that I did so," she said, "for since then I have heard that you have borne a good character for honesty and sobriety and—and—"

He looked up.

"And horsebreaking," he replied, with a smile that was deeply yet not maliciously sarcastic.

Lady Florence flushed haughtily.

"Therefore I have changed my mind—not influenced, however, by the latter reason—and intend that you shall have the ponies to break."

"I thank your ladyship," he said, bending his head, and raising his eyes to hers again instantly, with calm patience.

"I was but now riding to your encampment to tell you that you might have them; but seeing you working here, I stopped to tell you yourself."

"Thank you again, my lady," he said. "You are very gracious. The ponies shall be broken in most carefully. I will train them myself."

"Yourself!" she said, dreamily drooping in the saddle, and looking miles beyond him. "You, then, break the horses in?"

"Sometimes," he said.

She glanced at his axe.

"You are not so idle as you were yesterday. What are you doing?"

"I am cutting trees, my lady," he said.

"And yesterday you were reading. What was it you were reading?"

"Shakespeare's 'Hamlet,'" he replied.

Her dark eyes opened wide with faint astonishment.

"Do you like—that is, I mean—are you fond of poetry?"

"Some poetry, my lady—Shakespeare's especially."

She paused, and stroked the silken mane of her horse.

"Do all of your tribe like Shakespeare?" she asked, innocently.

"Alas, no!" he said. "Would that they did! The gipsy knows nothing of life's best gifts. I learned to read only by a blind chance, my lady."

"How was that?" she asked.

"From an old man whom our people found on the wayside and succoured," he replied, hastily.

It was not in his nature to speak but of the shortest of his own good deeds.

She looked interested—strangely interested for an earl's daughter.

"You learned to read—what else?"

He hesitated.

"Some few other accomplishments, my lady, not worth speaking of to such as you, yet priceless to me."

"You find them real?" she said. "You are happier for them?"

It was the same question Lurli had put, but how different the tone! The one breathed of a hope that he might be happier. The other was full of surprise that he should endure his life, having received a glimpse of a higher.

"I cannot say that always," he said, his eyes growing restless and shadowed for the first time.

"But that I am happy, as this world's happiness goes, judge for yourself, my lady," and he glanced up at her with a short, quiet smile. "I am free; I am strong; I have health."

"And beauty," thought the lady, silently.

"And you are satisfied with your life—"

Before he could answer the horse moved impatiently, and started.

He stretched out his hand to seize the bridle, and their hands met.

She saw in that instant that his hand, though tanned, was small and exquisitely formed; then drawing away her hand hastily, and glancing at his face, she saw that it had crimsoned and that his lip was tremulous.

In another instant it had regained its usual calm, and his voice showed nothing of the sharp, swiftly passing emotions which the touch of her hand had aroused in him, as he said:

"Your horse is timid, my lady; it has been frightened some time or other."

"Indeed!" she said. "Not while I was riding it. Could you break it of its nervousness?"

"Yes," he said, "if your ladyship will let me have it."

She pondered for a moment, the jewelled handle of her riding-whip to her rose-red lips.

"I—I think I will," she said.

He looked some of the pleasure that he felt, and still holding the bridle, stroked the satin neck.

"When will you let me have him?" he asked.

"To-morrow," she said. "How soon shall I have him back?"

"In a week," he replied.

"Do you stay so long on the moor?" she asked.

"I thought gipsies never stayed long at any place."

"Neither do they," he said. "But they stay so long as their chief orders them."

"And you are the chief of your tribe?" she said.

He inclined his head.

"What do they call you?" she asked.

"Tazoni sometimes," he replied.

"No; I mean by what title?"

"King," he answered, gravely.

She looked at him as he stood, calm, respectful, and dropped her eyes.

"It is a high title," she said. "and it sounds strange to unaccustomed ears. How long have you been king?"

He thought for a moment.

"For three years. I have no right to the title nor the office," he added. "We have always had a queen to govern us. The rightful head of the tribe is among us even now."

"A queen!" she said, with ever-increasing interest.

"A queen," he assented. "She is a daughter of the great Queen Zora, and should have taken command in succession to her, but she chose to place me in her stead. I am but a king by royal favour," and he smiled.

"And this queen, is she old?"

"No; Lurli is very young—much younger than I."

Lady Florence looked astonished.

"Lurli is a pretty name. Is she your sister?"

"No," he said.

Lady Florence's darkly pencilled eyebrows contracted the slightest in the world.

"Of course she is beautiful. I have heard that all the high-bred gipsies are beautiful."

"Lurli is very beautiful," he replied, after a few minutes' pause.

"Beautiful, and not his sister. She is to be his wife no doubt," thought Lady Florence, and a thrill of disappointment, as vague as it was strange, ran through her heart.

With a touch of her usual hauteur she said:

"My horse is quiet again, I think."

He took the hint, and setting the bit straight loosened his hold of the bridle and stood back.

Lady Florence set the horse in motion and without a word of adieu looked before her.

As she did so, however, he saw her start and change colour, and, turning to ascertain the cause, saw, at a little distance, half hidden by the young trees, a horseman.

So earnestly had they been talking—though outwardly with such haughty indifference on Lady Florence's part—that the spectator of the interview had been able to approach them on the soft, mossy ground unheard and unseen.

Directly Lady Florence's eyes detected him, however, he rode forward and discovered himself to be Lord Raymond.

Lifting his hat and bidding a respectful good morning, he pulled up beside her, and bent his black eyes in their usual set regard upon Tazoni, who, after meeting their scrutiny for a moment with his calm but keen glance, took up his axe and fell to work at the tree as if no interruption had occurred.

"One of your men, Lady Florence?" said Lord Raymond, casting a glance at her from his small eyes.

"No, my lord," she replied, her voice sounding cold and formal, and her face laughily set in supreme serenity.

"Hem! Cutting down some timber for your father?"

"No," said Florence, again. "This is not Dart-eagle land."

"Then what—" he began, with much curiosity, but Lady Florence stopped him by saying as she touched her horse with her light whip:

"I have been speaking to him about my ponies; he is to break them in. I am now going home, my lord."

"I'll ride with you if you will allow me," he said, in his softest tone, and the pair rode off, Tazoni never once looking after them.

They had not ridden far before Lady Florence, who had maintained a profound silence, pulled up suddenly.

"What's the matter?" asked Lord Raymond.

"I have forgotten to tell that person to whom you saw me speaking that he was to come for the ponies to-morrow morning. I must ride back."

"No," he said, "I'll go. Perhaps you will wait for me?"

"Thank you, you are very good," she said, coldly, and he turned his restless horse and plunging his spurs into its sides dashed back.

Tazoni heard the dashing of the hoofs on the turf, and looked round.

"Here, you fellow!" said Lord Raymond, coarsely.

"You've to go up to Earls-court—that house on the hill up there—for the ponies the lady was speaking about."

Tazoni nodded silently.

"D'ye hear?" exclaimed Lord Raymond, stilling his spurs to him, and speaking with overbearing insolence.

"I hear," said Tazoni.

"Then next time a gentleman speaks to you have the civility to answer!" said the young lord, raising his heavy whip.

But the eyes of the gipsy king for all their calm were quick. As the whip rose stained arms rose with it, and the next instant the weapon of insult was wrested from the bully's hand.

Then, with a smile of deepest scorn, Tazoni held it out to him and without a muscle of his face showing either anger or embarrassment said:

"You have dropped your whip."

Lord Raymond's face grew crimson with fury, but the next moment, as his blazing eyes met the intense regard of the other's, his face turned to a dead white, a spasm of some indefinable feeling, of which a mysterious fear formed some part, thrilled to his craven heart, and without a word he snatched the whip from the strong brown hand that had so easily torn it from him, and rode off as if the fumes of a nethermost pit were at his heels.

Lady Florence waited for Lord Raymond's return with an air of profound abstraction.

Do what she would to repress the interest which came in her heart for the young gipsy, the feeling grew so intense that it is not too much to say that now when she had left him his face still haunted her, and his clear, musical voice rang distinctly in her ears.

"I wish I had returned and told him myself," she thought. "That insolent lordling will give my message with the impertinence of a despot. Perhaps my gipsy king will refuse to obey so imperious a mandate."

She beat her riding-habit with an impatience strange and new to her, and was about to turn her horse's head in the direction of the plantation where Tazoni was at work, but, at the appearance of Lord Raymond, stopped.

"Have you told him?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied. "But I don't know whether he will come. He is an insolent rascal. Why do you employ such a fellow, Florence?"

"I did not find him insolent," she said, in her high-bred tone, that was full of an underlying scorn.

"Then you were more fortunate than I was," he retorted, with a scowl. "I hate these gipsy creatures, and when I'm master here I'll keep a pack of bloodhounds to hunt them off the grounds."

Lady Florence restrained her scorn by a great effort.

"Poor gipsies," she said. "How they will deplore your father's death, my lord!"

Then she lightly touched her horse with the dainty whip, adding:

"I will cut across the park, I think; it is too hot to take you out of your way. Good morning. Please give my love to Lady Ethel."

And before he could do anything more in word or deed than raise his hat and commence his eulogy that he might accompany her, she had put the Arabian at a low fence, and was cantering across the park.

Tazoni, when Lord Raymond had left him, resumed his work, and until the Earls-court stables clock chimed the hour of one the strokes of his axe and the crashing of the falling timber resounded through the woods.

With the stroke of the hour he dropped his axe, washed his face and arms in the stream, and, seating himself on the felled trees, ate his crust of bread and drank a glass of the crystal water, with an appetite and a simple thankfulness which would have befitted a Dives.

While he was still seated, gazing through the thick foliage, a figure—dusky and slightly bent—was toiling up the road.

From the road a bye-path led to the spot where Tazoni was resting.

The woman, wearied with the heat and the barren road, turned into it, and, with steps rendered noiseless by the moss, came full upon the reclining man.

He looked up, and seeing that it was a woman, not young, and weary, rose, with that inherent and truest courtesy, and pointed with a smile to his seat.

The woman, however, seemed for the moment too lost in staring at him to accept his offer, and it was not until he had said: "Will you not sit down and rest awhile? It is very hot," that she recovered herself.

With a slight, frightened start, she lowered her head, and seated herself meekly on the tree.

He threw himself upon the moss, at a little distance, and, to give her time to regain her breath and composure, for he thought his unexpected presence had frightened her, he examined and sharpened his axe.

Meanwhile she stole covert glances at him, and a troubled, uncertain look gathered in her eyes and mouth, which grew more marked, as, looking up, he said, quietly:

"Have you walked some distance?" glancing at her dusty dress.

"Yes," she said, in a thin voice. "From Dove-court."

"That is a long way," he said, compassionately.

"It's where the stage passes—is it not?"

"Yes," she said. "I came by the stage from the North."

He nodded.

"I know the journey, though I have not made it in the coach. You must indeed be tired—and thirsty, perhaps," he muttered to himself, and, rising, he caught up a leaf, twisted it into a watertight cone, and filling it from the stream, returned, and offered it to her.

She looked up with deprecating surprise, but took it thankfully.

"It is very kind of you," she said. "How grateful it is after all the dust and heat. Thank Heaven, I am nearly at my journey's end. Are—are you one of the workmen from Northcliffe Hall?" she asked, hesitatingly.

"No," replied Tazoni.

"I beg your pardon," she said, quickly. "I thought you were, seeing you at work here. I am going to the Hall."

He inclined his head.

"They should have sent a conveyance for you," he said, gravely.

"No, no," she replied, eagerly, as if to ward off his reproach. "They did not expect me, at least not yet. Oh, my lady would have sent the carriage had she known. My lady is kindness and sweetness itself."

He nodded again.

"What, Lady Northcliffe?" he asked.

"Yes," she said.

"Lord Raymond's mother?"

This second question seemed to call forth a strange and painful emotion in the woman.

The leaf cup fell from her hand and she half started to her feet, but, with a visible effort, which was not lost upon the surprised Tazoni, she answered, in a cold voice:

"Yes, Lord Raymond's mother. Do you know him?"

"Is he dark, thick-voiced, and—" "Insolent" he was about to conclude with, but remembering that his companion might by chance be an old and attached servant of the family, he substituted—"haughty gentleman?"

"Yes, he is dark; that's him," she said, nodding her head twice or thrice. "He—he is a noble gentleman. A lord's son, sir; and therefore properly proud, properly proud!"

"A lord's son should possess a higher heritage than pride," said Tazoni, gently.

"True, true," admitted the woman, nervously. "But we must not forget that Lord Raymond is an earl's son and highly born."

"He seems not likely to forget it himself, for the matter of that," said Tazoni, rising, with a light laugh, axe in hand.

The woman looked at him wistfully.

"Might I ask when you saw his lordship last?" she asked, with suppressed eagerness.

"A few hours back," said Tazoni.

"Alone, sir?"

"No with Lady Florence Dart-eagle," he replied,

and a shadow, swift and transient as a summer cloud, passed across his brow.

"Ay, ay," muttered the woman, in a satisfied tone. "As it should be, as it should be! You know Lady Florence, sir; she is beautiful?"

Tazoni nodded. He felt so strange at the mere mention of her name that he could not trust himself to speak.

"Of course," continued the old woman. "How could she be anything else? Quite a woman now too, sir. I have nursed her in these arms; the sweetest babe Heaven ever poured its sunshine on. Ay, and she'll be the sweetest bride Northcliffe Hall ever held."

Tazoni turned aside as if struck by an unseen arrow. "Then my Lady Florence is intended for Lord Raymond's bride?" he asked.

"To be sure. And is it not fitting? They are both young, both handsome and both good."

"Hem!" said Tazoni.

"Northcliffe and Earls court!" resumed the woman, in tones of triumphant eagerness. "It will make a mighty house, young sir. Quite proper and fitting, and Heaven bless the union!"

Tazoni uttered no "Amen," but shouldering his axe, said, after a pause:

"Can I help you up the hill? I am going across the wood to some trees, but I can spare the time, and shall be glad to assist you."

"No, sir, I thank you," said the woman. "I am stronger than I look, and the Hall is within sight. Good-day, sir, and thank you."

"Good-day, mother," said Tazoni, with his gentle deference, and he strode off.

The woman looked after him until his stalwart form was lost among the trees. Then she allowed her head to sink upon her hands, and a heavy sigh burst from her lips.

"How like! how like! I could see the old earl in his eyes, hear him in his every word. 'But a workman. How can that be, I wonder?'"

Then she rose, and, arranging her dusty bonnet and shawl, made wearily for the path.

As she did so a voice behind her arrested her steps, and a tall, dark-featured man came stealthily to her side.

With a suppressed scream, she fell back, and put up her hands against a tree to prevent herself from falling.

"Luke," she exclaimed, in a faint whisper.

"Ay, old woman, and not my ghost; so ye needn't stare thine eyes out."

"You here—back again! What does it mean?"

"Here! Why shouldn't I be here? What's Earls court Wood done that I shouldn't visit it? And it means that I am tired of skulking about a strange country, and among strange folk, and that I've come back to see old places and old faces—like yourself, you know. You're here, as well as me."

"I was sent for," she said, still in the same voice, and still leaning against the tree, in sheer weakness of mind and body.

"And I wasn't, and that's the only difference. But you've no call to trouble your head about me. Fancy me dead, as you've wished me many a long year; and, as for me, why, I'll fancy you're out of your mind, and stowed away quietly and safely—or ought to be," he concluded, with a sudden savageness.

She shrank from him.

"Don't, Luke! I'm not what I was. I'm a poor, shattered woman—"

"Bah! Who was that you were talking to just now?" he said, sharply, bending his dark, twinkling eyes with a fierce scrutiny upon her shrinking ones.

"I—I don't know. He was very kind and gentle with me—and, oh, Luke, he brought all the dreadful past before my eyes!"

The man made an impatient gesture.

"Keep your tongue still, and let bygones be bygones. It's no affair of yours."

"Oh, Luke, my own boy—"

He scowled at her, and interrupted with a threatening gesture.

"Lies in the churchyard there. You're not blind yet; go and read the tombstone there. Your boy lies there, and you will do well to remember it; only a madwoman would forget it."

There was a terrible significance in the words that made her shudder.

"I sometimes think I am mad," she said, in a hushed voice.

"Ay, and other people, too," he retorted, with a brutal laugh. "The young Lord Raymond says you are not far from the road to Bedlam."

She stopped her ears, and uttered a terrified cry.

"Luke, Luke! Do you want to kill me?"

"Not while you keep quiet," he growled. "Keep quiet, that's all I want at present. You are going

up to the Hall; be careful. You can't be too careful. If you take my advice you wouldn't go at all. It's like carrying a lucifer match through a gunpowder factory. A false word, a slip of the tongue and we should be blown up, and you know it."

She nodded with despairful sadness.

"I know it, Luke. I will be careful, indeed I will, only let me go and see him. Oh, Luke, if you knew what I felt. I can't help my natural feeling. Luke, tell me, is he happy?"

"Happy! I should think he was, if you mean Lord Raymond? Can't he get everything to make him him happy? Plenty of money, which he don't forget to spend. Hah! hah! I know something of his London games, and could surprise my lord and lady countess if I liked. Plenty of money and a coronet in the distance; to say nothing of a young wife who is the pride of the county. Happy! Why shouldn't he be?"

The woman's face regained a little colour, and she nodded her head eagerly.

"Luke, it makes me almost happy to hear you say so. If he is only good and happy—"

"Good!" muttered the man, with a grin; but Marian did not hear him nor see his face, for she was wiping the tears from her eyes.

"If he is only worthy to be what he is, I am content."

"I should think so, and so is he," said he, "and now you'd better get on. Remember what I've told you, and don't forget too that I'm not a hundred miles away, and that I generally know what's going on. There, off with you! Here's some one coming down the road, and it's as well for me to keep dark, perhaps."

So saying he stepped through the trees and disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

So soft and sweet a gentleman was he
That truth upon his lips turned into flattery.

Prior.

The following morning Tazoni himself, as desired, proceeded to Earls court for the ponies.

The groom—the same who had passed his condemnation upon Lord Raymond's spurs—received him very graciously, indeed almost respectfully.

"You'll do your best with 'em, won't you?" he said, "cos the young mistress is very fond o' horses, and that 'ere cream pair is a particular fancy o' hers."

Tazoni smiled.

"They shall be as docile as doves."

The groom nodded with satisfaction, and regarded the gipsy with increased curiosity.

"All right, and now come in and get something to drink, and a little in the way of luncheon."

Tazoni shook his head.

"Thanks. I breakfasted at sunrise, and I shall dine, if Heaven be kind, at noonday; between the two meals I eat nothing—for a good reason, I want nothing. Still I thank you all the same."

"But," argued the groom, "Lady Florence said I was sure to offer you some luncheon and—in fact I'm afraid I shall catch it if you don't make yourself at home."

Tazoni smiled.

"Lady Florence will not doubt my gratitude for her kindness, and for your part, as a proof of it, give me a glass of water from that spring yonder, no mean gift in such weather."

The groom, more puzzled than ever, drew a glass of water, and brought it to him.

Tazoni drank it and drove the ponies away.

Half-way across the moor, and within sight of the encampment, an open carriage met him, and in obedience to a signal from the Earl of Dartegale, who, with the countess, Lady Florence and Miss Slade, was seated in it, the horses were brought to a standstill, and a footman alighting from the box ran towards Tazoni and told him that his lordship wished to speak to him.

Tazoni, with a slight but transient flush, turned the ponies and led them up to the carriage.

Lady Florence gave him a glance of recognition but did not speak, as the earl commenced at once:

"Oh, my good fellow—but there's some mistake, surely! You are not a gipsy," and he gazed at him long and steadily.

"I am, my lord," said Tazoni, in a clear voice.

"Indeed," said the earl. "Pardon me, but you are totally unlike the race as I always distinguish it in features and figure. Hem! No matter, however. I called you. Why, Florence," he broke off, "are not those the ponies?"

"Yes," said Lady Florence, calmly, and looking away from Tazoni, upon whose serene face her gaze had hitherto seemed chained. "I have changed my mind, papa. But go on, please; you are keeping him waiting," she said, in a voice audible only to the earl.

"Ah, yes, true," said Lord Dartegale, who had not ceased to regard the gipsy with some curiosity. "I called you, my man, to tell you that I think some of your men have been poaching on my estate."

Tazoni's brow darkened, but he said nothing.

"Two or three nights since my keepers caught sight of a man trespassing in the preserves, and searching the covers they found a hare or two. Last night the rascal was seen again, and more distinctly. From the description they give of him, I should say he was one of your party. Now, I can't have anything of that sort. I'm lord of the manor, you know, and in theory Marston Moor is mine; that is to say, I can give you notice to quit. Besides which, I think it is rather ungrateful, considering that my steward has employed twenty of your fellows in the hay field."

Tazoni's eyes fixed upon him grew stern and angry.

"My lord," he said, drawing himself to his full height, but speaking in a lower tone than usual, "if I find that the poacher is of our race and among us, I promise to hand him over to you within twenty-four hours, but forgive me if I dare hope that you may be mistaken. I know none who would be guilty of such vile ingratitude as to steal from the man who has protected and befriended us. Give me but your permission to track the thief through your estate, and I will pledge myself to discover and capture him."

"That is but fair," murmured the earl to Lady Dartegale.

"Well, my fine fellow, be it as you say. I will tell my keepers that you shall have the run of the preserves for a night or two, and I'll trust you—to how great an extent you, who to judge from your looks and speech are no idiot, must be fully aware."

"I fully appreciate and am really grateful for your lordship's confidence. Believe me, it shall not be abused."

Then he waited in silence, his strong tanned hand resting on the horse's bridle.

"Very well," said his lordship. "Good-day to you."

Tazoni bowed low, and the carriage rattled on.

"What an extraordinary-looking man!" exclaimed Miss Emilia, who during the whole of the conversation had been eyeing Tazoni through her jewelled eyeglass as if he were some strange specimen from the Zoological Gardens. "Most extraordinary; spoke most excellent grammar, and had quite the grande air!" and she laughed with gracious contempt.

Lord Dartegale was stroking his gray moustache with an air of abstraction, and awoke with a start.

"Ay, yes, most extraordinary. Did you notice?" he added, bending over the countess, "anything remarkable in him?"

The countess nodded.

"He was remarkably handsome," she said.

"Nothing more?" asked the earl.

"No, nothing. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, a mere nothing—a fancy only," he responded, as if disinclined to impart the idea, and nothing more was said.

Lady Florence had maintained absolute silence, although she had been strongly tempted to rebuke, in her quiet, royal way, the unworthy and childish contempt in her cousin's voice.

A week passed. The days had grown hotter; so hot, indeed, that all attempts at exercise had pretty well been abandoned at Earls court and Northcliffe by all excepting Lady Florence, who never missed her morning gallop and her walk upon the terrace in the evening. There had been several dinners exchanged between the two great houses, and Miss Slade had, in her slow but effective way, stolen very far into the good graces of the young Lord Raymond.

She never lost an opportunity of a tête-à-tête with him, and during that opportunity never failed to apply the balm of her flattery to his wounds, which Florence's coolness and repression caused in his self-love and vanity.

But all the time she played her cards so well that Lady Dartegale, whose pure and honourable heart rendered her an easy prey to Miss Slade, fully believed that her niece was doing her utmost to help the match which for so many reasons the two families so much desired.

At the end of the week the Northcliffe carriage was seen winding through Earls court Park, and when it stopped at the door a strange gentleman assisted Lady Northcliffe to alight.

"Dear me!" said Lady Dartegale, as the cards were brought to her. "'Mr. Horace Denville!' Who is he? I never heard Lady or Lord Northcliffe speak of him."

"Horace Denville!" exclaimed Miss Slade, who was reclining on a couch, fanning herself with Florence's jewelled fan. "How strange! Why, dear aunt, have you never heard of Horace Deu-

ville? He is quite the lion this season. So handsome and so distinguished; he is a relation of the Norfolk Denvilles—very old family—and they say—here she lowered her voice—"that he will come in for all their wealth, and that you know," bowing to Florence with elevated eyebrows, "is enormous."

"Yes," said Florence. "Well, shall we see this lion?"

And with very little curiosity or interest she followed Lady Dartegle into the drawing-room.

There were Lady Northcliffe, Lord Raymond and Mr. Denville.

Mr. Horace Denville was tall, fair and certainly distinguished-looking. The most intense and immovable composure sat on every feature and limb. His eyes, which were fine and expressive, reposed beneath his long brown lashes like lotus leaves on an Indian stream. His hands, which were exquisitely gloved, were small almost to effeminacy; his moustache drooped in regular and well-brushed gold, and his lips, which he opened as he spoke with slow and languid composure, were as delicately cut and coloured as the Apollo Belvidere's.

For the rest he was dressed by his valet in the latest fashion as interpreted by the court tailor, and his trousers, which were copied and imitated by all the fashionables of the day, dropped in statuesque perfection upon a boot that for fit and elegance outshone Count D'Orsay's own.

Such was Mr. Horace Denville, and Lady Northcliffe introduced him as a friend of Lord Raymond, who, looking darker than ever by the side of the blonde exquisite, stood sullenly regarding the carpet and Horace's face intermittently.

"How ridiculously strange to meet you here! the very last person I should have expected!" said Miss Slade, gushingly, as, with Lady Florence, she and Denville were walking on the terrace. "I thought you never left town till quite the end of the season."

"I very seldom do," said Mr. Denville, speaking almost for the first time. "But it has been so heavy a one, and so intolerably hot, that I was tempted to seek fresh fields and pastures cool."

"Just as if you were a donkey," said Lord Raymond, emerging from the drawing-room by the open window.

"Exactly, my dear Raymond," said Mr. Denville, not at all put out of countenance. "And a donkey very nearly done up. I assure you, Lady Florence, it has been the hardest season I ever knew."

"Yes?" said Florence. "We never or very seldom go up to town in the season. Mamma—indeed all of us—like the country too well in the summer to exchange it for the crowded ball-rooms and a dusty park."

"You are quite right," answered Mr. Denville, stroking his moustache, "and I wish other people were as sensible. What a delightful view, beautiful! May I bring my sketch-book, Lady Dartegle, and take liberties with your park? Those elms are magnificent."

"By all means," said Lady Dartegle. "Bring it as soon as you can and sketch us all round. Yes, the scene is worth remembering. But I did not know you were an artist, Mr. Denville."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Alas! I dare not claim so grand a title. I am but an humble student. Still I will avail myself of your kind permission."

"If you are fond of pictures," said Florence, in pure kindness of heart, "there are some very old ones in the gallery, and papa will show them to you. I am sorry to say that I make a poor cicerone. I remember the subjects, but forget the artists' names, and the latter is the most important: so the unfortunate visitors whom I have attempted to marshal through the gallery inform me."

Mr. Denville smiled, and responded in a voice which he well knew how to make soft and musical.

"Ingrates they must have been! Most truly you would make a bad cicerone, Lady Florence."

"And why?" said Florence.

"Because"—here he looked at her face, and his glance said plainly: "Because one would neglect the lifeless faces for the one beautiful living one beneath them." But he said instead: "Because no lady makes a good guide."

Lady Florence inclined her head.

"What tower is that?" he asked.

"That is the ruined tower of an old chapel-of-ease," said Florence. "There is a better view from the top of it than can be obtained anywhere else in Earls-court. I forget how many counties one can see. It has another attraction too—it is haunted."

"Then it is inestimable for me," said Mr. Denville. "To see several counties and a ghost at one fell swoop is a chance not to be missed. May I include the chapel tower in your permission, Lady Dartegle?"

"Yes; and all Earls-court, if you will, please," said the countess, who was rather taken by the

elegant, pleasant-voiced dandy. "We hope you will come and make acquaintance with all our sylvan lions. To them Florence can be a most excellent guide, however much she may fall with the pictures."

"We must have a picnic," said Lady Northcliffe. "And, Raymond, you must drive us in your new drag to all the ruins in the neighbourhood, if Mr. Denville has a taste for them."

"Thanks—a thousand thanks," said Mr. Denville, with slow and well-bred gratitude. "Lady Florence, I shall venture to keep you to your word. And Raymond, the drag by all means. You can drive like a modern Jehu, I know."

"I'll drive you to —," commenced Lord Raymond, with ill-tempered vivacity, but broke off in time to conclude more quietly, "all over the world, if you like."

"Thanks; five counties will satisfy me," said Mr. Denville, smiling just enough to show his white and regular teeth, and in the musical laughter which the rejoinder provoked the visitors took their leave.

"Well, how do you like him, Florence dear?" asked Emilia, with effusion.

Florence hesitated.

"On so short an acquaintance judgment would be unfair. He is very handsome," she said.

"Is he not?" exclaimed Miss Slade. "Oh, delightfully so; and so much admired! Do you know the people actually intrigue to get him to their dinners and balls?"

"It is strange that such an idol of society should tear himself away from his worshippers," said Florence, laughing. "He will find Northcliffe rather dull, I am afraid."

"Yes, one would think so," said Miss Slade. "Really, I can't imagine what brought him down!"

(To be continued.)

"CURFEW MUST NOT RING TO-NIGHT."

ENGLAND'S sun, so grandly setting,
O'er the hills so far away,
Filled the land with misty beauty

At the close of one sad day;
And his last rays kissed the forehead
Of a man and maiden fair:

He with steps so slow and weary,
She with sunny, floating hair;
He, with bowed head, sad and thoughtful,

She with lips so cold and white,
Struggling to keep back the murmur,
"Curfew must not ring to-night."

"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered,
Pointing to the prison old,
With its walls so tall and gloomy,

Walls so dark and damp and cold—
"I've a lover in that prison,
Doomed this very night to die

At the ringing of the curfew,
And no earthly help is nigh.
Cromwell will not come till sunset."

And her lips grew strangely white
As she spoke, in husky whispers,
"Curfew must not ring to-night."

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton,
Ev'ry word pierced her young heart
Like a thousand gleaming arrows,

Like a deadly, poisoned dart—
"Long, long years I've rung the curfew,
From that gloomy, shadowed tower;

Ev'ry evening, just at sunset,
It has tolled the twilight hour.
I have ever done my duty,

Strove to do it just and right;
Now I'm old I will not miss it—
Girl, the curfew rings to-night."

Wild her eyes and pale her features,
Stern and sad her thoughtful brow,
And within her heart's deep centre

Bessie made a solemn vow.
She had listened while the judges
Read, without a tear or sigh,

"At the ringing of the curfew
Basil Underwood must die."
And her breath came fast and faster

And her eyes grew large and bright;
One low murmur scarcely spoke she—
"Curfew must not ring to-night."

She with light steps bounded forward—
Sprang within the old church door—
Left the old man, pacing slowly,

Paths he'd trod so oft before.
Not one moment paused the maiden,
But with cheeks and brow aglow

Staggered up the gloomy tower
Where the bell swung to and fro.
Then she climbed the slimy ladder—

Dark, without one ray of light—
Upwards still, her white lips saying:
"Curfew shall not ring to-night."

She has reached the topmost ladder,
O'er her hands the great dark bell;
And the awful gloom beneath her
Like the pathway seems to hell.

See! the pond'rous tongue is swinging,
'Tis the hour of curfew now;
And the sight has chilled her bosom,
Stopped her breath and paled her brow.

Shall she let it ring? No, never!
Flashed her eyes with sudden light.
And she springs and grasps it firmly:
"Curfew shall not ring to-night."

Out she swung—far out the city
Seemed a tiny speck below,
There, 'twixt heaven and earth suspended
As the bell swung to and fro!

And the half-deaf sexton ringing—
Years he had not heard the bell,
And he thought the evening curfew
Tolled young Basil's funeral knell.

Still the maiden, clinging firmly,
Cheek and brow so pale and white,
Stilled her frightened heart's wild beatings:
"Curfew shall not ring to-night."

It was o'er! the bell ceased swaying,
And the maiden stepped once more
Firmly on the damp old ladder
Where for hundred years before

Human foot had not been planted;
And what she this night had done
Should be told long ages after.
As the rays of setting sun

Light the sky with mellow beauty,
Aged sires, with heads of white,
Tell their children why the curfew
Did not ring that one sad night.

O'er the distant hills came Cromwell—
Bessie saw him, and her brow,
Lately white with sickening horror,
Glowed with sudden beauty now,

At his feet she told the story,
Showed her hands so bruised and torn.
And her sweet young face, so weary,
With its look so sad and worn,

Touched his heart with sudden pity,
Lit his eyes with misty light.
"Go, your lover lives," cried Cromwell;
"Curfew shall not ring to-night."

K. A. C.

DURING the month of May last no less than 31,363 dozen pairs of boots and shoes were exported from the United Kingdom, representing a value of 104,260*l*. These figures, compared with the corresponding period of 1873 show a falling off of 15,550 dozen pairs, or a decrease to the extent of 41,830*l*. in the trade for one month.

ONE hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds has been received at the Mansion House on behalf of the distress in India. It is expected the supplementary sum will bring this up to 200,000*l*. Something like 400,000*l*. will represent the amount of public and Government subscriptions. With the exception of the special fund raised for the Lancashire distressed operatives, the Bengal fund is one of the largest ever raised in the City of London.

CHURCH RESTORATION.—On a recent Sunday, Divine service was performed for the last time in the curious manor church which stands in the private park near Hughenden House, the seat of Mr. Disraeli. A restoration on a scale so extensive as to involve the demolition of almost the entire edifice has been planned, and a faculty has been obtained from the archbishop. The work is to be carried out under the direction of Mr. Bloomfield, the well-known ecclesiastical architect. The estimated cost of the works in hand will be 5,000*l*., 3,000*l*. of which has been already collected. The time required for the rebuilding will be nearly two years, and in the meanwhile service will be performed in a substantial wooden erection in Mr. Disraeli's grounds.

A GRAND CLAPPER.—The remains of the famous bell, known as the "Georges d'Ambrose," have recently been sold by auction at Rouen. The original clapper was broken in two in 1732, when Le Frisand, a locksmith of Rouen, undertook to make a new one. He invented an apparatus, enabling a single person to convey a piece of two tons from the forge to the anvil, and a lathe to turn the great clapper. He took two months to complete the work, and the new clapper, which weighed 1,578 lb., cost 3,000 fr. It was 6 ft. 8 in. high, and measured 4 ft. 9 in. around the largest part. The "Georges d'Ambrose" itself was founded in 1501, hung in what was called the "Butter Tower," and was rung in full swing by sixteen men. The *Journal de Normandie*, referring to this asserted fact, says that men must have been much stronger at that time, for now it would take thirty or forty men to ring such a bell. Perhaps the inference would be correct were the fact established.



[GILBERT, THE WOODCUTTER.]

SILVERSTONE'S HEIR; OR, THE MYSTERY OF BLACKROCK TOWER.

CHAPTER XIX.

I travel all the irksome night,
By ways to me unknown;
I travel, like a bird of flight,
Onward, and all alone. *Montgomery.*

The night that saw the death of Mrs. Delarme had hardly set in when a young man might have been seen cautiously stealing in the shadow of the cottages towards the road that led from Silverstone.

He was evidently attired for a long journey, and carried a little satchel in one hand and a stout hickory stick in the other.

The moment he left the cottages behind him his movements grew less cautious; he attached the satchel to his stick and suspending it over his shoulder struck out at a brisk, steady pace.

We will not farther mystify the reader—this lone traveller was Harry Harland on his way to London.

The light of the stars came out ere he had gone half a mile. He was pushing forward for the little village of Stapleton, where he expected to meet the night stage that would convey him over one-half the distance of his journey. Twice he heard parties coming down the road, and twice he had to conceal himself until they had passed.

"Confound them," the young man muttered, as he issued forth from his hiding-place; "if I am to be interrupted this way I shall not reach Stapleton to-night."

Once more Harry, quitting the friendly concealment of the hedgerow, struck out at a brisk, even pace along the road, but again the annoying footsteps broke on the night air, and with a muttered imprecation he was compelled to bound into an adjoining meadow, where in the friendly shade of the clipped hawthorns he would be free from observation.

The footsteps drew nearer and nearer.

At last the sound of voices broke with clear distinctness on his ear—voices too that sent the warm blood surging like a flood to his heart. Then a deathly pallor overspread his face, succeeded by an icy chilliness. He staggered against the dyke side, and but for its friendly support would have fallen.

This was indeed the hardest blow of all—Marian Delarme approaching utterly unconscious of his presence.

Should he rush forth from his place of concealment and reveal himself to her? No, he would not do

that; why make himself unutterably miserable for a woman who cared so little for him?

"On to London is the word," he muttered, sighing sadly at the thought of leaving the home which almost up to the present had been so dear to him. "In London I may forget her, in London I shall at least be happier."

Marian Delarme and her companion passed on. Harry Harland gathered from their conversation that Mrs. Delarme was dangerously ill, and he felt sorry for it, as he accounted Marian's mother a very excellent woman in her way.

"Poor Mrs. Delarme," he said, as he emerged from behind the hedgerow and struck out along the highway. "I regret indeed to hear of her illness; but hers is a strong constitution, and she will recover. I hope I'll meet no more interruptions on my journey," he added. "The road seems to be alive to-night with all sorts of wayfarers."

It was just the night for travelling, and before long Harry Harland's depressed spirits gave way before the invigorating influence of the crisp night air. He met no more interruptions on the road till he was a good half-dozen miles from Silverstone. He soon entered the village of Stapleton, but discovered to his dismay that the night stage had gone at least half an hour before he got there.

Were there no means of catching it?

Yes; he might engage a horse and ride to the next village, take a short country cut which led through the mazes of a somewhat dense wood, and by so doing no doubt be in as soon as the stage itself.

This was exactly the information volunteered by the landlord of the "Hare and Hounds." "But mind," continued mine host, "in passing through the woods you don't fall into the hands of Philistines."

"Philistines!" echoed Harry. "What do you mean by Philistines?"

"Simply this," returned the man. "Blenheim Wood is infested by a lot of gipsys, who, together with their other depredations, commit an occasional robbery, which might not fall short of murder if much resistance were made to their demands."

Harry was astonished.

"You are surely jesting," he said.

"You will find it no jest, however, so beware!" Boniface said, grimly. "But do as you like; it's not for me to advise you or anybody else. But stop—where do you come from?"

"Silverstone."

"And you have not heard of the frequent acts of violence which have been committed in Blenheim Wood?"

"In good truth I have not."

"Then, indeed, is Silverstone out of the world."

"No more out of the world than is Stapleton," retorted Harry, a little hotly. "But it's very strange," he continued, in a musing strain, "that such acts should be permitted."

"Do you think so?" the landlord said, satirically.

"I do, indeed. Have they not sufficient police about here to ferret the fellows out?"

"Humph," said mine host, contemptuously, "police indeed. They find it enough to do to take care of themselves. But let me advise you to hasten your steps, or you'll miss the stage."

Harry Harland, after a little haggling, bargained for a horse, which he was to leave at the next village. Then, mounting the hack, he was soon speeding over a long strip of woodland for Blenheim Wood.

Blenheim Wood is finally reached, and the young man passes by a pathway into its densest depths. But he has no fear that he will go wrong—quite the reverse. "The path to the right," the landlord of the "Hare and Hounds" said, and said distinctly, and the path to the right he keeps.

On, on, deeper and deeper into the woodland he goes until the bridge path grows so dark that he cannot distinguish one object from another.

An hour and more passes by, and still his horse bears him along swiftly and steadily. His journey now seems to be endless. He is yet, as far as he can tell, buried in the heart of the wood.

Can he have strayed in the darkness from the true path? For the first time in his life he feels a real anxiety for his safety—feels the chill of fear creep over his heart. The solitude of those myriad trees weighs heavily on his soul. He tugs at the reins and pulls up undecidedly.

"I have surely taken the wrong path," he says, and though the words come mutteringly from his lips he fancies he hears a hundred unearthly voices in answer to his own.

A sudden rustle in the trees makes him start. He listens, but all is silent again. Then the rustle rings out much louder, and evidently nearer.

He turns in his saddle, and perceives a black object approaching him.

A rift in the trees from where the apparition appears shows him that that object is a man bearing a bundle on his back and a stout staff in his hand.

This unexpected sight gladdened his heart and flattered him not a little with the sweet hope of securing a friendly conductor to guide him out of that dreary labyrinth.

"A good night to you, sir!" cried Harry, as the

man approached him and returned the salutation at least civilly.

He lowered the bundle off his back to the ground, and, leaning on his staff, looked inquiringly at the young fisherman, but was otherwise silent.

"I have lost my way," said Harry Harland, speaking again, "and if you could only direct me—"

"Where do you come from?" interrupted the stranger, bluffly.

"From Stapleton."

"And where were you going?"

"To Sherrington," was the reply.

The stranger broke out into a coarse laugh, which rang and re-rang in a thousand echoes through the woodland.

"Sherrington—ha! ha! You must be an idiot to think this is the way to Sherrington. You are miles and miles out of your reckoning, my good sir, and in the very heart of Blenheim, too—the forest which has as many paths and turnings as there are days in the year. You must be an idiot," the stranger again said, with a malignant chuckle which made the young fisherman positively recoil.

"I followed the directions that were given me," said the young man, indignantly.

"Very like—very like," was the sneering answer, "directions, indeed—ha! ha!—directions that were meant to lead you to destruction."

Harry was getting really alarmed, and dismounted from his horse.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

But the stranger, instead of replying to him, only laughed the louder.

"I insist on knowing what you mean," again cried Harry, almost fiercely.

"Oh, ho; you insist, do you?" sneered the other; "then you may insist, too, and that is all you will get by it. But come, I have no desire to quarrel with you," he added, assuming a graver tone; "and I really regret to see you placed in so unpleasant a situation."

He paused.

Harry Harland nevertheless gained renewed confidence from his words.

"Things may not be so bad after all," he thought.

"So you were going to Sherrington?" the new comer said.

"Yes."

"And you expect to get there to-night?"

"I hope to."

"Humph! It is simply impossible."

"How is that?"

"You can never make Sherrington to-night by yourself."

"Of that I feel almost positive," the young fisherman answered. "But with a guide—"

"Oh, with a guide; that's another thing. But it is not easy to procure a guide in the heart of a dense forest like this, I can tell you."

"Yourself, for instance," persisted the fisherman; "I'll give you a guinea for your trouble."

"I should like to accept your money," was the mechanical reply, "but to-night it is quite out of my power. However, if you trust yourself to my guidance I will at least lead you to a place of safety where you can obtain shelter till the morning."

This offer was not to be despised, though Harry paused some moments before he thought of accepting it.

"What is this place of which you speak?" he asked at last.

"A woodcutter's hut," was the reply.

"Is it far from here?"

"Not more than a mile or so."

"Do you think I shall be safe there?"

The man broke into a low, derisive peal of laughter.

"What do you mean by that?" he demanded, as soon as his chuckle had subsided.

"Are you not aware, my friend, that Blenheim Wood is the constant haunt of robbers?"

"Would to Heaven that I could stay to-night with good Master Gilbert," was the reply, "and I would not be afraid of robbers. But I must go on, and to tell you the truth my pack is not over light."

"Then strap it to my horse's back, and he shall bear it for you," said Harry, good-naturedly.

The offer was gladly accepted, and they jogged on through the forest to the woodcutter's hut.

The stranger seemed quite familiar with the various windings and turnings along which they traversed; and, though in the darkness, he went on with an easy confidence that went far to remove any doubts which the young fisherman might have previously entertained.

"He is at least honest," said Harry to himself. "It is not likely if he were leagued with robbers that he would take the trouble of carrying so heavy a burden on his back; night marauders don't generally carry packs; he must be a pedlar saving distance by a cross-country route like myself."

The stranger was a very intelligent man and so far prepossessed himself in the young man's favour.

After nearly half an hour's sharp walking his conductor stopped, and, pointing to a narrow path that diverged to the left, said:

"You are now nearly at your journey's end. Take that bridle way and it will lead you direct to old Gilbert's cottage. It is not a very pretentious residence, but such as it is I know you will be welcome there. You cannot miss your way; if you pursue the path straight you will soon see a light."

"Why not come yourself?" said Harry, a little suspiciously.

"Humph! because my business will not permit me," was the reply.

The stranger then resumed his pack, and, wishing the young man a hasty good-night, disappeared in the darkness.

Harry hesitated for an instant whether he should follow the man's advice or not. The perils of his situation however soon fixed his wavering resolution, and he pursued the path pointed out to him.

He found himself soon in an unbeaten footway obstructed by brambles and undergrowth. Along this path he led his horse with great difficulty; the poor animal threatened every moment to fall to the ground, and Harry could not resist the apprehension that he was being led on a fool's errand through the direction of his unknown conductor. This made him look around him more cautiously until he at last ascended a gently sloping eminence which opened upon a beautifully portioned glade. How rejoiced he was now to detect the glimmering of a light described by the supposed pedlar! It appeared to proceed not more than a hundred yards from where he stood.

Hastening his steps forward, he soon perceived a small cottage nestling among the tall oaks and elms which on every side bounded the spacious opening. He made his way to the door and knocked.

In a moment it was opened and he was invited to enter.

CHAPTER XX.

When purposed vengeance I forego
Term me a wretch, nor deem me foe;
And when an insult I forgive
Then brand me as a slave, and live. Scott.

GILBERT, the woodcutter, was a man closely verging on fifty years with a rubicund and rather pleasant countenance. His garb was clean and well-fitting, and showed off his rather stalwart form to advantage.

After the usual greetings had been passed preparatory to entering the hut the woodcutter seemed to notice apparently for the first time Harry Harland's horse standing browsing in the glade.

"Hum!" he said, "accommodation for man and beast? Rather unexpected this. Pray what induced you to travel through Blenheim Wood at this time of night, and how came you here?"

The young fisherman in a few words related all that had befallen him.

"Rather unpleasant," observed the old woodcutter, sympathizingly. "Going to London too. You must belong near Stapleton, do you not?"

"Not many miles from it," replied Harry, simply—"Silverstone."

"Oh, ah; the fishing village—I know it well. Your name?"

"Henry Harland."

The man started, and a blaze of triumph lit up his face.

"Son to old Laurence?" he said, quickly recovering himself; "that is recommendation enough that you are at least honest. Come in! But stay a moment—what about your horse? The poor beast must be fatigued and hungry both."

The manner of old Gilbert more than reassured the young man as he replied:

"Yes, in good truth this useless tramp must have tried the poor hack sorely. If you can provide provision for him I shall only be too thankful and pay you to boot."

"Hoot, toot! never talk of payment from your father's son," replied the woodcutter, good-naturedly. "But having no stables of my own, as you see, and little provender, he must fare as best he can. Enter my humble abode, and permit me to see to his security for the night."

Harry Harland, with a hearty "thank you," did as he was desired. Not expecting much convenience, he was struck with wonder when shown into a neat little room, not in the least corresponding with the outer appearance of the cottage. He had expected to be introduced to the residence of poverty, and found instead a habitation which bore evident marks of prosperity, and seemed to be rather the abode of some wealthy recluse than that of a poor woodcutter.

Gilbert was not long away attending to the wants of young Harland's horse, when he re-entered the

cottage, and set about preparing a meal for his guest.

While he was busy obtaining the necessary viands for the supper Harry had time to take a good view of the objects around him, assisted by the faint glimmering of a lamp which burned on a high mantel above the fire-place. He was much struck at observing a huge cutlass hanging by the side of an old oil painting; it was unsheathed, and its bright blade dappled with evident blood spots.

The young man shuddered as he beheld this.

Had he, indeed, fallen among cut-throats?

Though an improper article of furniture for a woodcutter's dwelling, the afterwards recollected that Gilbert, living in an unfrequented part of the forest, might need some such weapon to defend himself against unwelcome visitors. But his apprehension returned when he saw a brace of pistols hanging on the wall, which, upon examination, he found to be loaded.

Proceeding farther in his search, he discovered a great quantity of guns, pistols, and cutlasses in a recess near the fire-place. He was chilled with terror, and just as he had taken the lamp in his hand to obtain a closer view of this alarming furniture old Gilbert entered the room with the supper.

Harry immediately replaced the lamp on the mantel, and tried to look as composed as he could.

"Ha, ha!" cried the woodcutter, merrily, "you seem to be taken up very much with my poor apartment. However, you are not the first who has been surprised at the evidences of comfort which it presents. Come, I have brought you something to silence the pangs of hunger. Pray be seated and help yourself."

But the young fisherman's appetite was already gone.

His host next fetched knives and forks and a large loaf of bread, and, seating himself, began to eat with great avidity. At first, he took little notice of his companion, but, perceiving at length that he did not partake of the supper, he abruptly exclaimed:

"Well, sir, why do you not eat? I think you must be hungry if you have travelled so far and missed your way."

His joviality soon revived Harland's spirits; but his country-like simplicity and seeming honesty did not exactly correspond with the great number of firearms and cutlasses which the young man had seen, but, nevertheless, he took up his knife and fork at last, and joined him in the meal.

When supper was over Harry could no longer suppress his curiosity; he asked the woodcutter why he kept so many guns and cutlasses in his house.

"What!" said he, for the first time giving evidences of anger. "You have been searching my apartment. Is this fair of a guest?"

The young man felt the rebuke, but quickly related all that he had heard from the landlord of the "Hare and Hounds."

"He's an idiot," said old Gilbert, "to be putting such stuff into your head, or any other one's. You are as safe in Blenheim Wood as in your own native village. What if there are a few gipsies here, and they flick an occasional hen-roost, and knock over deer now and then? That doesn't say that they would commit a robbery or a murder. The landlord of the 'Hare and Hounds' is an idiot—an egregious donkey!" he added, peevishly.

But Harry Harland was far from being reassured. Old Gilbert, the woodcutter, exhibited too much anger in his anathemas of mine host of the Stapleton Coach inn to convince him that all was right.

"But why," said he, finding speech, "do you keep this array of firearms here? It is not surely from the fact that you are over fond of looking at them?"

Old Gilbert waxed angrier. His face grew almost purple with rage.

"These are fine doings," he cried. "Who bade you search my room in the first place? What does it matter to you what I keep? I take you in here and you go prying about my premises. I think every one has enough to do to mind his own business!"

Harry thought the same thing. But situated as he was, surrounded by dangers in fact, he deemed it but right to himself to ascertain at this point how he stood. These continued reproaches from the old woodcutter had now the effect, however, of hastening his departure. He arose to his feet and asked how much he had to pay.

"Pay? Why, nothing," cried old Gilbert, brushing all evidences of his rage from his features. "Ah! ha! ha! you cannot understand an old man's humour yet, I see. Come, don't be so foolish; sit down and finish your supper."

"I have eaten enough, thank you," Harry replied, a little haughtily.

"And you intend going?"

"That is my intention."

The woodcutter looked serious.

"Hark!" he cried, suddenly. "Do you not hear the storm? You cannot depart in this dark, tempestuous night."

Suddenly a loud gust of wind blew in the door and extinguished the lamp-light, leaving them in total darkness.

The storm had come on as suddenly, as it was unexpected.

"Close the door!" cried the woodcutter, in a hoarse voice. "I cannot stand this darkness."

Harry mechanically obeyed and sent the massive door to with a bang.

The woodcutter struck a light, and lit the lamp.

"Hark! how the tempest roars, and how the rain beats against the windows," he cried, with half-delirious terror. "I hope you don't think you'll be shot or stabbed here because there are so many firearms and swords in that recess. No, no, good friend, you must not leave me. You need not be afraid. All these things are not mine; they belong—"

"To whom?" asked Harry, who was rather surprised at this piece of intelligence and the strange terror evinced by his host.

"They belong to sportsmen who have laid them up there that they may have them when they are hunting in this part of Blenheim Wood. Perhaps you may see them yourself to-morrow morning. That cullass that you see hanging there I bought some years ago off a coastguardsman."

"Oh, indeed," said Harry, sarcastically; "perhaps you bought the others as well, and the several braces of pistols which I see about the room."

A dark scowl settled on the face of the woodcutter for a moment, then his features turned as if pallid from fear. He at last gave vent to a strident laugh as he replied:

"I perceive, young man, you are too wide awake to believe in any blind subterfuge. It is no use disguising the fact any longer from you. These arms belong to smugglers, who occasionally make my humble cottage their place of abode."

"And these are the sportsmen who are expected here to-morrow?" said Harry, suspiciously.

"They may come, or may not. But I imagine that will be of no consequence to you, whether they do or not."

"Perhaps not."

The woodcutter, as Harry uttered these words with a dryness of accent that was in the main suspicious, scanned him keenly, but the fisherman's countenance was immovable.

They now observed a silence for some minutes, while the storm which had suddenly burst upon the forest raged in all its fury, and sent shower after shower of rain against the windows. Though Harry was not inclined to await the coming of the "sportsmen," he did not wish to go forth with his horse into the darkness and uncertainties of the wood; he dreaded to run the risk of escaping from an imaginary danger only to fly into the face of a real one. So he at last resolved, at all hazards, to remain where he was until the breaking of daylight.

"I may court danger in staying here," he thought to himself, "but it will be greatly increased by any hasty departure. If I had only a brace of good pistols now I might be prepared for any emergency. I wish old Gilbert would leave the room for a few minutes, that I could help myself."

As he spoke the woodcutter suddenly left the apartment, and Harry as quick as thought secured two navy pistols.

These, after ascertaining they were loaded, he concealed about his person.

Hardly had he done so when Gilbert re-entered the room. He looked sharply at his guest, but perceiving nothing unusual in his features he resumed his seat by the fireplace.

Another few minutes passed by, and Harry begged the woodcutter to show him to a place where he could sleep, intending, when he was alone, to see to the priming of his pistols.

Old Gilbert took the lamp from the mantel, and opened a side door leading to a small chamber, where a bed was. They both passed through the passage and entered the apartment.

"Here," said the woodcutter, "you may sleep till daylight, and rest your weary limbs as safely as at Silverstone. I keep this chamber for travellers; take this lamp; I will come for it when you are asleep."

So saying, he turned on his heel and closed the door of the chamber after him.

Harry Harland, now that he was alone, entertained graver suspicions than ever. He examined the priming of his firearms closely, and, satisfied that these would not fail him in his hour of danger, he placed them on the table and next turned his

attention to the apartment itself. The first thing he perceived was that it had no windows; a fact which, for the moment, caused him the most serious alarm.

"Humph!" he said, placing the lamp on the table and surveying the boarded walls. "Old Gilbert thinks to trap me like a fox, does he? We shall see. Now for the door."

He trod softly towards the door, and found it locked, or, what was more probable, fastened on the outside. Here his heart almost failed him. An icy chilliness seized on his blood.

"Do they intend murdering me?" he shudderingly asked.

Nerving himself with a despairing effort, he proceeded farther in his investigations.

Taking up the lamp from the table, he threw its flickering glimmer along the walls. But nothing suspicious met his view. He next advanced to the bed, and held the lamp down to see whether it was fastened or not lest he might sink down with it into the cellar. Though this apprehension was groundless he made another discovery which filled his soul with horror.

There were traces of blood upon the pillow!

The young fisherman when he beheld this was seized with a sudden vertigo; his hand trembled so violently that the lamp fell to the floor, plunging the room in instant darkness.

As soon as he recovered from his fright he searched for his pistols. He had to grope some time in the darkness before he could find them. At last he had them in his possession, and his nerves quieted a little. He now sat down on a little stool by the bedside listening intently for the slightest sound that might come from without.

All was quiet at first, but after a quarter of an hour of this dead stillness he heard some one entering the passage from the adjacent room, the door of his chamber gently opened, and he heard the voice of the wood-cutter call out:

"Are you asleep?"

Harry uttered not a word.

After a short pause the same voice resounded once more:

"Have you extinguished the lamp?"

As the young fisherman replied not the wood-cutter retired.

Again was all hushed in profound silence. But it did not last long.

The young man's ears were suddenly assailed by the sound of many voices, as if a number of people were talking at almost the same instant. But the discourse was carried on in so low an accent that Harry was unable to distinguish one word from the other.

All at once he saw through the crevices of the door a sudden glare of light.

The conversation was still carried on secretly and mysteriously.

Brave as Harry was he could not help shuddering. He sat by the bedside like a culprit who awaits his doom, but who at the same time is determined to defend himself to the last extremity. More than once it was his intention to rush from the room and, with a cocked pistol in each hand, fight his way into the open air. But no sooner had he formed this resolution than he abandoned it as impracticable.

His situation was becoming each instant more critical. At the least noise from without he would start to his feet and place himself in a posture of defence. It at last grew so unbearable to him that he determined at any cost to rush forth and endeavour to escape. Was the door fastened? He trod lightly across the room, and found that it opened to his touch.

He was about to rush forth when he heard a tremendous uproar in the adjoining room; there came a tramping of feet; he started back from the door, and the next instant it flew open with a crash.

A light gleamed through the chamber, and Harry Harland beheld three ruffians with naked cutlasses approaching him.

"What means this?" he cried, grasping his pistols steadily as he retreated to the farther end of the room.

"It means that you are in our power," replied the foremost of the three men, "so drop your pistols and surrender at discretion, or we will hack you to pieces!"

"Knock him on the head!" shouted another; "hold no parleying with him!"

"Remember," cried Harry, his courage rising with the occasion, "I hold the lives of two of your number in my hands. Approach one step, and I fire!"

He raised the muzzles of his pistols as he said this in line with their heads.

For a moment the ruffians were staggered, their features horribly distorted 'twixt rage and fear. To be bearded thus by one man, however, was more than

they could bear, and encouraged by voices from without they prepared to rush in and disarm him.

"Down with him!" they shouted, perceiving that they were reinforced by three sturdy ruffians from the next room, among whom was old Gilbert, the woodcutter.

Fierce imprecations were uttered; the light of a blazing pine torch spluttered and lit up the murder den with the brilliancy of day.

There was a sudden rush, the discharge of a pistol, a yell of agony, and the young fisherman, overpowered by numbers, was borne to the ground.

He was instantly disarmed, bound with tough cords, and in this situation dragged rudely from the chamber through the passage into the apartment occupied by the woodcutter.

Glowering down fiercely on him, the unhappy young man beheld twelve stalwart ruffians, ready to sacrifice him to their vengeance.

How bitter now, how unavailing were his regrets that he had ever left Silverstone.

His mind ran back through the days of his childhood to other days—to his first love—the love that had blighted his heart and his life. Oh, that he could now recall them, even the most miserable of them. Life bore a hundred charms now which he had never dreamt of before.

But not one grain of mercy or compassion could he see in those cruel countenances; he was indeed to die.

Casting his eyes in agony around the room, they fell upon the rubicund countenance of the old woodcutter. But it was as stern and unrelenting as fate itself, and Harry Harland felt the cold chill of death seize upon him, for well he knew that he could hope for nothing from his intercession.

During this the wounded man was attended by one of the gang, who had the reputation of having some knowledge in surgery.

The wound was in his side, and the robber groaned deeply as the bullet was being extracted. At length bandages were applied, a powerful opiate administered, and the man, released in part from his sufferings, fell into a feverish slumber.

Some of the gang now caught Harry in their arms, and were for carrying him bodily into the cellar, but were prevented from doing so by sly old Gilbert, who expressed a desire to hold a few moments' conversation with him.

Harry was lowered to the ground—for he was bound hand and foot—and old Gilbert approached him.

"Perhaps you are not aware who I am," said the woodcutter, in a cold, mechanical tone, "nor should I think you were. However, that matters little. Your father knows me, that is all I care for, and your father did me a great wrong which I am about to revenge on his son."

As terrified as Harry otherwise was he was almost dumbfounded at this man's words. But he managed to exclaim nevertheless, with not a little astonishment:

"My father did you a great wrong?"

"Ay," repeated the woodcutter, "your father—Laurence Harland! You hear!" he added, addressing the ruffians who thronged on either side.

They nodded grimly and bade him proceed.

"Perhaps you would like to hear the wrong he did me?"

"I would indeed," replied Harry, endeavouring to wear a calmness which he was far from feeling. "Until this moment I was not aware that one of my family ever injured any one."

The gang laughed low and bitterly.

"Hear him!" they cried, with subdued malignance; "the virtuous son of a virtuous father—ah, ha, ha!"

The young fisherman could scarcely master his indignation, and old Gilbert proceeded:

"Perhaps you have not heard of a certain poaching affray which took place near Silverstone a matter of five years ago," he said. "Ha! I perceive I refresh your memory. Humph! And now do you dare tell me that your father has not injured me and mine?"

"You are surely not Maurice Brentford?" cried the young fisherman, between terror and astonishment.

"I am Maurice Brentford," was the stern and emphatic reply.

Harry Harland looked into the old man's face and with that look the last faint ray of hope departed from his heart.

"I am the father of the boy whom your sire sent into penal servitude."

And the words came from his lips like the hissing of a serpent.

"It was his swearing," continued the woodcutter, through his hard-set teeth, "that made me what I am—an outcast—a wanderer—with every man's hand against mine and mine against every man's."

"But was that my father's fault?" asked Harry, almost stupefied.

A growl of rage and derision burst forth from the assembled crew.

"Who else's?" cried they.
 "If he had not sworn, my noble boy would not now be in penal servitude," groaned the old wood-cutter.

"Certainly not—certainly not!" cried the others, fanning the flame of rage and despair which was burning within his breast.

"But hear me," cried Harry Harland, with a last appeal. "My father had no enmity against your family. Then how can you say that he has willfully injured you?"

Gilbert was about to make reply to this when footsteps were heard without.

Each man rushed to his arms, but before they could grasp them the door flew violently open, and a short, stalwart-looking fellow with a bronzed complexion rushed into the room.

"Where is my brother?" cried the new-comer, looking around upon the men.

One and all pointed to the bed.

He approached it, and bent over the wounded man; the face bore the pallid hue of death, and all life seemed to have fled the body.

With a wild cry he leaped from the bedside, and, turning upon the assembled ruffians, demanded who had done it.

Without replying they pointed to the young fisherman.

"What—he?"

A glance of concentrated hate and fury came into the man's eyes; his face turned from bronze to livid. If a glance could have killed, Harry would have been dead; but he met the fellow's looks of fury unflinchingly—nay, even defiantly.

The man, with a muttered imprecation, after casting his eyes once more on the insensible form of his brother, rushed suddenly forward, snatched a murderous-looking knife from the belt of his nearest comrade, and, with a tiger-like cry, prepared to bury it to the hilt in the heart of the prostrate fisherman.

Another moment and Harry Harland would have been dead!

The ruffianly spectators stood transfixed, as if by a horrible fascination, to the spot. They seemed quite powerless to prevent that victim's premature death. Even old Gilbert looked on amazed and confounded.

But the young fisherman was not to die thus. The door of the cottage flew open a second time, and the intended assassin suddenly found his arm gripped as in a vice. The next moment he was hurled across the room and fell violently at the feet of his comrades.

"Is it thus you obey my instructions?" thundered a voice.

Harry Harland, opening his eyes, looked up, and beheld a man of gigantic stature towering above him. The new-comer was attired in the rather picturesque garb of a smuggler. He was a handsome, well-formed man, with black, piercing eyes, bold, aquiline features, and a cloud of raven hair which hung in glossy curls almost to his shoulders.

The ruffians seemed thoroughly cowed by the sudden appearance of this apparition, and uttered all sorts of excuses in palliation of their conduct, while the man who had been so roughly handled picked himself up and slunk away scowling into the next room.

"Release him!" said he of the smuggler's garb, pointing imperatively to young Harland.

One of the ruffians, with a gloomy but subdued air, stepped forward with his knife and cut Harry's bonds, and the young man leaped to his feet with a cry of joy, taking the brown hands of his unexpected preserver within his own and wringing them with heartfelt gratitude. His heart was too full to trust himself to words, and the tears trickled from his eyes like a little child.

The smuggler chief—for such he was—hurried to the partly-open door, and blowing a shrill whistle into the night was soon joined by two other persons. They passed into the cottage.

Harry Harland, looking round, uttered a cry of astonishment, for before him stood Stanhope Bainbridge and Captain Faulkner.

(To be continued.)

THE Duc de Montebello, formerly French Ambassador to the Court of St. Petersburg, died at Paris on the 19th of July. Napoleon Lannes, Duc de Montebello, was the son of Marshal Lannes (who perished on the field of Easing), and was born at Paris on the 30th of July, 1801. The youth was created a Peer of France in 1815, by Louis XVIII., in consideration of the distinguished services of his father; but he did not sit in the Luxembourg until after the Revolution of July, 1830, when Charles X. was hurled from the throne.

IMPROVED RAILWAY LAMP.—The gold medal of

the Society of Arts or twenty guineas is offered for an improved lamp or means of illumination, suitable for railway passenger carriages, that shall produce a good, clear, steady, durable and safe light. It must be simple of construction, and capable of being readily cleaned and repaired. In judging the merits, cost will be taken into consideration. Specimens in a condition suitable for trial to be sent in to the society's house not later than the 1st November, 1874. The council reserve to themselves the right of withholding the medal or premium offered, if, in the opinion of the judges, none of the articles sent in competition are deserving of reward.

EXPECTATIONS.

CHAPTER IX.

It was not the purpose of Mr. Charles Vernon to visit Blair Abbey boldly and openly in the character of a visitor of Miss Lyle. As his object was utterly wicked and nefarious, it seemed natural to him to approach it by subtle manoeuvres and a circuitous route, carefully concealing his deep interest in his young kinswoman. Accordingly, during his drive to the abbey, he matured a plan of procedure which seemed to him at once practicable and sufficiently guarded.

Blair Abbey, as we have elsewhere remarked, was a show-place, much visited by antiquarians and tourists, who were freely admitted to the more ancient and ruined portions of the great pile.

Mr. Vernon alighted at a little wayside inn about a mile distant from the abbey, and, leaving there his equipage, made a short cut across the fields on foot, entering the abbey grounds from the high road through a small gateway beside the picturesque porter's lodge.

He walked slowly up the grand avenue, which was nearly a mile in length, and thickly shaded by two long rows of ancient lime trees, mounted the steps leading to the imposing main entrance, and knocked vigorously upon one of the massive doors.

A liveried footman answered his summons.

Vernon preferred his request to be allowed to visit the ruined portion of the abbey, emphasizing his demand with a liberal gratuity.

"The housekeeper knows all the old legends and shows the ruins," said the footman. "Just follow the small avenue around to the iron door, sir, and ring the visitors' bell you'll find there. I'll send a message to the housekeeper, who will give you admittance."

Vernon obeyed these directions, turning into a narrow, heavily shaded walk that led to the ruins. Upon the farther side of the abbey, out of sight and hearing of the inhabited portion of the building, in the deep shadow of the old park which here grew close up to the walls, under a screen of ivy which mantled the walls like a curtain, Vernon discovered a small sunken iron door, beside which was a bell-knob.

He pulled the latter again and again. At last a key was heard grating in the lock, and the heavy door swung slowly inward upon its hinges.

A gray-haired old man, one of Madame Falconer's trusted retainers, showed himself in the aperture.

"I should like to visit the ruins," said Vernon, politely. "I supposed they were always open to visitors—that they were not even kept locked. Can I be admitted?"

"Yes, sir, come in," was the respectful answer. "Visitors are always admitted, sir; but the ruins, being connected with the modernized portion of the abbey, could not be kept unlocked, as you must see for yourself, sir. We should have all kinds of bad characters haunting the place if we afforded them such secure harbour. Come in, sir. The housekeeper will be here directly."

He admitted Vernon into a narrow passage, whose walls and floors were of stone, and thence into a small room that had probably served as a parlour in the old monkish days. The floor was of stone. The furniture was of deal, and had been carved and cut by visitors' hands. There was a niche in one corner, and enshrined in it was a small stone image of some saint or abbot—a relic of a former century. The light entered through a small ivy-screened window high up in the wall. The air was chill and damp, and Vernon shivered as he sat down in a tall, straight-backed chair.

The gray-haired old servant retreated into the passage.

Vernon looked around him curiously, and had just noted the fact that the ceiling of the room was in excellent order, when the shutting of a distant door, the rustle of drapery, and the sound of a woman's tread were heard, and the housekeeper of Blair Abbey entered his presence.

She was an elderly woman, with a reticent face and an air of dignity that was not ill-befitting her

position. She was devotedly attached to Madame Falconer, had identified her interests with those of the family she served, and was a woman to be implicitly trusted by her employer. She wore a black silk dress and a lace cap, and a cluster of corkscrew curls on either side of her face.

Vernon arose and made known his wishes.

The housekeeper carried a great bunch of massive keys, which were hung upon a heavy chain attached to her girdle. Bidding the visitor follow her, she proceeded to exhibit to him the various apartments included in the "ruins."

There was the great refectory with walls and floor of stone, and with a rude oaken table still standing, at which the monks had dined, and with the quaint, rough benches beside them in which the monks had sat at their meals. Then followed the quaint old chapel with its groined ceiling, its high altar, its dim, strange light, its ancient font, its stunted niches. Then came a long parlour. After which the housekeeper summoned the man-servant to conduct Vernon to the crypt, the underground cells, and other subterranean places of interest.

She was standing in the passage when he returned to the upper world.

"It's a grim, gruesome sort of place, altogether," said Vernon, pausing beside her. "The stories you have told me of the Headless Monk and of the White Abbot lend an absolute horror to these prison-like rooms. I should not fancy being a monk in an abbey like this, but no doubt those old monks lived here like kings."

"In the days when Blair Abbey was in its glory kings lived but little better, as regards lodgings, than peasants do now," said Mrs. Gorset, "and the monks fared gloriously here in respect to wines and meats. You have noticed the great kitchen, with its immense fireplace, the wine-cellar, the larder, and the store-rooms?"

Vernon assented, adding, with an upward glance:

"These rooms seem all closely ceiled overhead. Are the upper rooms in equally good order?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Gorset. "The roof is in excellent repair, and the upper rooms are almost habitable. The abbey passed from the hands of the monks into those of a family named Chichester, of noble birth and great favour with the then reigning monarch, and has remained in the possession of that family ever since. Madame Falconer is the last of her name. She was a Mrs. Chichester. For nearly a century after coming into possession of the abbey the Chichesters occupied this portion of the abbey, equally with that which has since been modernized. The upper rooms are quaint and interesting. Notwithstanding the fact that these rooms, or some of them, were so long occupied by the family, they are popularly supposed to be haunted, and scarcely one of the abbey servants could be persuaded to enter the ruins, as they are called, after dark. As to the upper rooms, no servant could be persuaded to enter them even in the daytime, for the Headless Monk is supposed to walk there still. Most visitors decline to ascend to the upper rooms, so that we have quite given up our former practice of showing them; still, if you would like to see them—"

"I would," said Vernon. "One can hardly believe that superstition still lingers in England to such extent as that the very servants here believe these rooms to be haunted. I should like to see the especial den of the Headless Monk."

Mrs. Gorset conducted the visitor up a broad, rickety flight of stone stairs which had been worn full of hollows by the tread of many feet. The upper rooms were found to be large and lofty, with great chimney-places, large diamond-paned windows completely veiled with ivy, hard wood floors black with age, and with a general air of desolation similar to that Vernon had noted below. He went to one of the windows and brushed away the cobwebs and dust and peered out through the thick mass of ivy, but the trees of the park grew so thickly and darkly, sweeping the walls of the house with every movement of the air, that any outlook was impossible.

They speedily returned to the lower floor. Vernon thanked his guide and bestowed upon her a half-sovereign. Then he approached cautiously the real object of his visit.

"I hear," he remarked, "that this grand old relic belongs to a very old lady, one Madame Falconer, a descendant of the Chichesters. Has she children to succeed her?"

"Neither children nor grandchildren, sir, but she has recently adopted a young kinswoman of hers, a Miss Stair, who was brought up on the Continent, and who is Madame Falconer's acknowledged heiress."

"I should like to pay my respects to Madame Falconer," said Vernon. "I am a cousin of Sir Mark Trebasil, of Waldgrove Castle, and my name

is Vernon. Here is my card, which I wish you to take to your lady."

"Madame Falconer is not at home," said the housekeeper. "She went away two days ago with Miss Stair for a trip upon the Continent. They must have reached London yesterday."

Vernon started. He remembered that he had heard Madame Falconer described as hump-backed and dwarfish, and his thoughts immediately reverted to the aged lady and the young girl he had seen at the London terminus on the preceding evening, whose appearance had made such a striking impression upon him.

"Is Madame Falconer very short, like a child of ten?" he asked, eagerly. "Is she yellow-skinned, wrinkled, and humpbacked? Are her eyes very bright, very keen, and very black? Does she walk with a gold-mounted staff?"

The housekeeper assented.

"And is her adopted daughter a young girl, very slim, very beautiful, and very aristocratic in her carriage? Has she a pale, olive skin, black eyes and black hair?"

"You must have seen them," said Mrs. Gorset. "You have described both Madame Falconer and Miss Stair accurately."

"I saw them alight from a train at the London terminus, and noticed them on account of the old lady's marked hideousness and the young lady's marked beauty. And so they were Madame Falconer and her adopted heiress?" said Vernon, skillfully concealing the interest he felt in the ladies mentioned. "Is there no other lady at Blair Abbey?"

"None other—excepting Miss Lyle," said the housekeeper. "She is Madame Falconer's hired companion, but a real lady in the best sense of the word. Miss Lyle is also a cousin of Sir Mark Trebasil. Is she not perhaps your relative also?"

"Certainly she is," assented Vernon. "I have never seen her, yet I have always known of her existence. She is my own cousin. Please take my card in to her. I should like above all things to see her."

Mrs. Gorset accepted the card, and conducted Vernon through a dark and narrow passage into the modernized portion of the abbey, ushering him into a reception-room. She summoned a servant, and despatched him to Miss Lyle with the card and a message.

The servant returned presently, saying that Miss Lyle would see her kinsman and would come to him directly.

The housekeeper retired into an adjoining room.

A little later the little click of tiny boot-heels was heard on the marble pavement of the hall, the door opened, and Charlot Lyle entered the room.

She was dressed in violet cashmere, and looked as fresh and dainty as a newly blossomed lily. Joliette, in her glories, night-like loveliness, bright as the stars, might resemble most the superb yet tender rose, softly flushed and softly fragrant; but Charlot Lyle was like a pale lily in her Northern beauty, with her golden hair and azure eyes. She came forward with gentle grace, and Vernon arose, advancing a few steps to meet her.

He introduced himself in an easy, well-bred manner, and claimed kinship with Miss Lyle. She blushed and extended her hand, remarking:

"I have long known of your existence, and of my relationship to you, Mr. Vernon, and am glad to see you. You are the first member of the Trebasil family whom I have met—the very first of my mother's kindred who has ever addressed one word to the daughter of Graham Lyle, the music-master."

There was an indignant little sparkle in her blue eyes, a rising colour in her cheeks. Vernon smiled as he responded:

"The fault has been one of inadvertence rather than of intention. Not one of the Trebasils, I am positive, knows your whereabouts. The elder generation, in which were included your mother and my mother, is vanished from the earth. The present generation is represented by Sir Mark Trebasil, your cousin and mine; but he is on the Continent, and, of course, knows nothing about his kinspeople at home. You and I, Miss Lyle, are obscure members of the family—the poor relations of the great and wealthy baronet."

"I am poor," said Charlot, "but you—"

She paused, glancing at his elegant dress, the diamonds that sparkled on his shirt front, and the primrose-coloured kid gloves upon his hands.

"You mean that I don't look poor," said Vernon, easily. "My poverty is only comparative, of course. Beside Sir Mark Trebasil I am poor."

He had taken possession of a chair. Charlot sat down at a little distance, greatly interested in her hitherto unknown relative, whose black, glittering eyes and white, glittering teeth seemed to fascinate her vision.

"Perhaps you know that I am only Madame Falconer's hired companion," said Charlot, after a brief pause, and with a faint shrinking from her cousin's piercing gaze. "I have been here a year, only a mile or so from the home that sheltered my mother's childhood and girlhood—the home in which she was born, and from which she fled to marry her music-master. I often pass the gates and park on my drives, and my heart often warms to the old towers which have been the cradle of our race."

"You are enthusiastic. Have you ever visited the castle?"

"Never," said Charlot, flushing. "My mother stole from her home like some guilty creature, and my grandfather sent after her his bitterest curse. I can never cross the threshold of Waldgrove Castle except as an invited and honoured guest."

"Sir Mark is very noble and generous. If he but knew of your position here, he would not rest until he had established you at the castle as in your rightful home. It would grieve him to the quick to know that his cousin toils for her bread."

"I would not accept his bounty," said Charlot, proudly. "I prefer to earn my living. I have been poor, Mr. Vernon, so poor that often, when I went to bed at night, I did not know where I should get my breakfast; but I have never been so poor as to accept what I have not earned. I have copied music, taught music, and when this shelter was granted me I looked upon it as an earthly heaven. It is such to me, and as long as Madame Falconer will keep me I shall stay here."

"You have spirit, I see. I like that," said Vernon. "I am not one to advocate a life of dependence, and yet I fancy you would be happier at the castle than here. There is your proper place, and I wish you were in it. The housekeeper says that Madame Falconer has gone upon the Continent. Will she be absent long?"

"She was not certain. She may be away from home several months."

"An odd movement in a woman of her years. I should think she would cling to her home, instead of drifting about from one cheerless hotel to another. I chanced to meet her at the London terminus, last evening. What a wonderfully beautiful girl is Miss Stair!"

"And as good as she is beautiful!" exclaimed Charlot.

"I thought that women never praised each other," and Vernon arched his brows. "She must be a friend of yours, Cousin Charlot."

"She is, my best friend. She is a noble creature, proud and passionate, generous and sweet, a girl of a thousand, a true lady, refined, dainty, and delicate. I cannot speak warmly enough in her praise," said Charlot Lyle.

Vernon's dark face lit up with a sudden glow.

"I comprehend the sort of nature you describe," he said. "A being of fire and flowers! She must be enchanting. Perhaps some day I may see this paragon. I am spending a few weeks in this vicinity. I came up to-day from Langworth, and have engaged a room at a little wayside inn, called the 'Barley Mow,' which is a mile or two distant from here."

"I know the place well."

"It is a picturesque cottage. I want to sketch the abbey ruins, the Black Weir on this estate, and various points upon the Trebasil property. I am something of an artist, I forgot to tell you. And in this crisp Cornish air, among the scenes of my mother's early life, I believe that an inspiration will come to me that will lead me straight to success."

"I hope!" exclaimed Charlot. "I have a passion of art, Mr. Vernon. I wish that I had the genius of a great painter. There is a spot not far from here, I have often wished that I might sketch. Do you know the White Waters? There is a lake known by that name upon this estate. It is very deep, and the waters are clear as crystal. It is said that many people have been drowned there. The monks stocked its cold white waters with fish, and even now it is noted for its finny occupants. In the centre of the lake is a small island, and on the island stands an old ruined tower, nearly covered with ivy, its pointed windows opened and unglazed, its steps broken, its stairs half gone. It is called the Lookout Tower, and was built by the monks, for what use no one knows, except to command a view of the neighbouring country. I know no more striking object than that old round tower."

"It would make a glorious picture. I must sketch it. Will you not show me the way, Cousin Charlot, if I will come for you in the morning?" asked Vernon, with suppressed eagerness. "The housekeeper might accompany us. There is a boat, of course, which we can take. You will go?"

Charlot hesitated. During Madame Falconer's absence life at the abbey was becoming very mono-

tonous. Charlot missed Joliette's gay, bright presence at every turn. There could be no harm, she thought, in accompanying her own cousin upon a little excursion upon the abbey grounds. He was certainly well bred and very fascinating. The tie of kinship to one so utterly alone was very strong. Her heart warmed to this cousin who had sought her out and claimed her as his relative.

"I should like to go," she said, after a little confused thought. "If Mrs. Gorset will go also, I will accompany you."

The housekeeper was summoned and the matter explained to her. Her views coincided with those of Charlot.

"A cousin," said Mrs. Gorset, "is only one remove from a brother. It's a pleasant sight to me to see relatives fond of each other. Blood is thicker than water, as the old saying goes, and I am glad to see even one of Miss Lyle's relations come forward to recognize her and be friendly with her. And so, if you please, Mr. Vernon, we will go with you to the island tower at any time you please."

"Say to-morrow morning, at ten o'clock," said Vernon. "I will call for you at that hour."

"There's a boat in the boat-house, and I'll get the key of the steward," said the housekeeper. "You will find us waiting."

Vernon arose to take his leave. Charlot Lyle went with him into the hall, and at his solicitation put on a coquettish little sun-hat and accompanied him a little distance down the avenue.

"We have fairly broken the ice and are already well acquainted with each other," said Vernon, as they strolled slowly along in the shadow of the trees. "It was a strange providence that brought me to Blair Abbey this morning. I shall bless this grim old haunted pile while I live. You are alone in the world—so am I. We are of one blood; our mothers were sisters. We can never be strangers to each other again. Let us be more than cousins—let us be friends. Is it a compact?"

Charlot looked up into his eyes, which frankly met her gaze. She read in their black glitter only honesty and kindness, and held out her hand quietly as she said:

"It is a compact. Henceforth we shall be friends, Mr. Vernon—"

"Cousin Charles. You shall not hold me at arm's length in that fashion, Cousin Charlot."

"Cousin Charles, then," said Charlot, with a pleased expression on her sweet face. "And now I must return to the house. Au revoir."

She took her leave of him gracefully and turned her steps toward the old Abbey.

Vernon walked slowly onwards, a red gleam sparkling in his eyes, the smile of a demon on his mouth.

"A good day's work!" he muttered. "The girl falls into the snare without a flutter. I must drive over to Langworth and return to the 'Barley Mow' to-night, bringing Gannard and my luggage with me. The girl is pretty. If I had not seen Miss Stair, I should have married Charlot Lyle. Having seen Miss Stair, a marriage with my cousin is impossible, and it only remains to remove Charlot in some other equally effective manner. What strange fate has linked my fortunes with those of Miss Stair? I saw her yesterday—fell in love with her at first sight—and to-day am come straight to her home in all unconsciousness! In following out my own schemes I have solved the question of her identity. I swear again that Miss Stair shall be my wife. My love, my pride and my interests are all united. I will combine the Trebasil and abbey estates, and be rich beyond computing. A gigantic career looms up before me. Only this blue-eyed girl stands in my way. There shall be no vulgar murder—no violence—no scene of any sort. I shall take her out to-morrow on the lake. I will be boatman. As usual in such cases, there will be an accident. Will any one blame me if she is drowned?"

The fiendish smile on his face deepened, and he hurried onward towards the "Barley Mow," exulting in his prospective triumph.

CHAPTER X.

In the very shadow of the Pyrenees, in French territory, stands the quaint little mountain town of Arpignon. As yet it is not frequented by tourists, and is as quiet and dull as if its inhabitants did not share in the concerns of this world, and as if the political fortunes of France and of Spain were not the slightest moment to them.

About three miles distant from this dead-alive Arpignon, upon a wooden hill, stands a lonely and picturesque old house known as the Château Croisac. The chateau belongs to an army officer who is stationed in Algiers, and who, desiring to secure at least a small income from his ancestral estate, had long ago placed its disposal in the hands of a land-agent in Paris. For years, however, no one had

cared to rent the chateau, which had remained empty and forlorn.

A brighter fortune dawned at last upon the Château Croisac. An English lady, examining the agent's list of houses, seemed struck with the situation of this one, and hired the chateau for a twelvemonth, paying without demur the demands of the agent in advance. She hired a small staff of servants, and despatched them on in advance to prepare the place for her occupancy. A fortnight later, after a leisurely journey southward, she arrived at Arpignon in her own travelling carriage, and passed on without stopping to her new home.

No visitors presented themselves at the Château Croisac, for the villagers were mere peasants, with the exception of the good curé, the white-haired old parish doctor, and an enterprising shopkeeper or two. It transpired immediately, through the servants of the new comers probably, that madame was a heretic, dwarfed, humpbacked, hideous, a veritable ogress of fourscore years; a witch even who might be expected to fly away upon a broomstick after nightfall, only that she was immensely rich and carried a full purse, while it is well known that witches, despite all their witcheries and enchantments, are invariably poor.

It likewise transpired that madame was accompanied by her grand-daughter, a beautiful young mademoiselle, with a slim, straight figure, soft, big black eyes, a complexion of pale clear olive, a red mouth, and hair like the blackest night.

It also appeared that madame and mademoiselle were attended by a grim English serving woman, who could not speak one word of French, but who guarded her mistresses and served them with dog-like fidelity and affection.

As the reader has guessed, the old ogress was Madame Falconer, the beautiful young mademoiselle was Joliette Stair, and the grim old serving-woman was Mrs. Bittle.

It was early in March when they settled themselves in the lonely Château Croisac. Desolate as was the place it had a certain beauty; the air was pure and clear, and there were pleasant walks and drives in the vicinity. The little household was cheerful, and Joliette brightened the exile of her benefactress with a return of her old vivacity and gaiety.

Their place of residence was revealed to no one except Madame Falconer's London banker. He forwarded letters which had been ordered to be sent to him and preserved his client's secret with religious care.

One day, a fortnight after their arrival at the chateau, Madame Falconer sat near the bright hearth in the drawing-room, silent and thoughtful. Joliette stood at one of the casement windows, looking out into a sudden snow-squall.

The room was long and low, with a wide fireplace, in which was a blazing wood-fire, and was furnished after an old French fashion.

The carpet was dull and faded; the chairs and sofas were newly covered in chintz; the doorways were screened with portières of silk—ample curtains hung upon bright brass rods. The tables were covered with books. A few pictures hung on the walls, portraits of the ancestors of the present owner of the chateau.

Altogether, the scene was cozy and homelike, with a sufficiently foreign air to give it an additional charm.

The snow whirled outside in thick gusts, completely shutting out the various features of the landscape. Still Joliette watched and looked, a strange sadness gathering over her features. The door opened, and Mrs. Bittle entered with the post-bag.

"Henri has just struggled in with the post, madame," said the attendant. "There's a great storm outside and he was delayed."

Madame Falconer turned her head slowly, her keen, black eyes shining under her thick, white brows, and drew forth a key which was attached to her watch-chain, and unlocked the post-bag.

There were several letters—three for Madame Falconer, one for Joliette from Charlot Lyle, bearing date a fortnight previous, and one for Mrs. Bittle.

"You can read yours here, Bittle," said her mistress. "It is from the abbey, no doubt, and may contain news that has been accidentally or purposely omitted from my letters."

She proceeded to examine her own.

They were business letters, one being from Mrs. Gorse, the abbey housekeeper, another being from the abbey steward, the third from Madame Falconer's lawyer.

"They are of no account," said Madame Falconer, having perused them. "What does Charlot Lyle say, Joliette?"

"It's an old letter, written the day after our de-

parture from the abbey," said Joliette. "There should have been a later letter."

"These letters are all old," said Madame Falconer.

"Is there news in yours, Bittle?"

"Yes, madame. My letter was forwarded from the abbey," said Mrs. Bittle, "and is from my daughter who went out to Canada, along of her soldier-husband. She has a little son whose health is poor, and she is bringing him home to England, where she intends to remain a year or two. Meggy tells me to write to her at once, at the post-office, Liverpool. She will get the letter on her arrival."

Madame Falconer's black eyes shone brighter under the white brows.

"Meggy is like you, Bittle," she said. "She is trustworthy."

The eyes of mistress and servant met in a long, comprehensive gaze.

"Write as directed," said Madame Falconer, at length, "and tell Meggy to come to this place without stopping. Her coming is providential. Let me see the date of the letter. There's time, Bittle. She says that she was not to start for a fortnight after the date of this letter. Write immediately. Henri shall go to Arpignon to-night, whatever the weather."

Joliette moved again to the window.

Mrs. Bittle, obeying her mistress's commands, sat down at a dainty inlaid writing-table, and laboriously scrawled the letter Madame Falconer had directed her to write. Stamps were affixed, and a servant despatched to bring Henri to the drawing-room.

He came in haste—a shock-headed peasant—honest and trustworthy—but a dolt in point of intellect.

Madame Falconer gave him his errand and the letter, and promised him a franc if he should arrive at Arpignon in time to post the letter in the night-mail.

Henri departed, eager and alert, determined to earn the promised reward.

Madame Falconer and her attendant had a long confidential talk that night in the bed-room of the former, after Joliette had retired.

The next fortnight passed without event. The weather grew mild and pleasant; the full flavour of the spring was come.

Some three weeks after the letter to "Mrs. Meggy Dunn, post-office, Liverpool," had been despatched, a letter bordered with black arrived at Château Croisac—a letter which announced Mrs. Dunn's arrival in England, the reception of her mother's letter, and the loss of her little child for whose sake the journey to England had been undertaken. The child had died and been buried at sea. The mother, nearly heart-broken from her loss, stated that she should hasten on to Arpignon without stopping a night in her native country. Her great anxiety now was to see her mother.

"She should be here to-night," said Madame Falconer, after a close perusal of the letter. "Send the chaise to Arpignon, Bittle, to meet the diligence which is due there at six. Go yourself, if you wish."

Mrs. Bittle ordered the chaise, but did not go in it. She preferred to await her daughter at the chateau.

As Madame Falconer had thought, Meggy Dunn did arrive that evening, and met with a cordial welcome, not only from her mother, but from her mother's aged mistress.

Meggy Dunn proved to be a fine, healthy, robust young woman, with a clear complexion and pleasant eyes. She had been trained from her birth to regard Madame Falconer with peculiar love and reverence. She was installed into the position of Joliette's own maid, and transferred a good share of her affection to the beautiful young girl who sympathized so kindly in her sorrows.

The weeks came and went. Travellers thronged to the Pyrenees, but not even one tourist came to Arpignon. The villagers ceased to talk so incessantly of the great people at the Château Croisac, but the white-haired old doctor began to visit the English strangers with something like regularity, and not even to the curé did he impart the object of his visits. No one could tell whether it was madame, the beautiful mademoiselle, or the serving woman who demanded the services of "Monsieur le docteur."

May came around at last, with flowers and soft southern breezes tempered by mountain air. One morning Henri was seen riding a horse at a gallop to the doctor's door. The doctor mounted behind him, and the two went at a gallop to the Château Croisac.

The doctor did not return to Arpignon until evening. When he alighted at his own gate the good old curé was in waiting, and drew his arm in his and led him up the path, demanding:

"Come, now, you have been at the chateau all

day, mon docteur. Who is ill there? Is it madame?"

"Not madame——"

"Is it mademoiselle?"

"Yes, it is mademoiselle, or the young madame I should call her," said the doctor.

"And what is the matter? Fever, consumption——"

"Nothing of the sort, Monsieur le Curé. She has a son—as fine a son as can be found in all France."

It was true. The ill-starred marriage of Sir Mark Trebasil and Joliette Stair had resulted in the birth of a son. This was an obstacle in Vernon's path which he, knowing nothing of Sir Mark's marriage, had not foreseen.

(To be continued.)

QUALITIES MOST ESTIMABLE IN THE ROSE.

A rose, taking all things into consideration, is, perhaps the most splendid of flowers. Throwing aside the national affection for our emblem, the rose is appreciated for itself. It has qualities peculiar to itself. It is beautiful from the moment when the colour peeps from its green covering until its flower is complete—handsome in all its stages. Its perfume is unequalled; and whether it be a single bud or bloom in the hand, a bush in the border, a tree on the lawn, or climbing the pillar, or winding around the archway, or covering the front of a house, it is equally admired.

In estimating the various qualities which give value to the rose, we are almost inclined to place the continual blooming first, even before perfume, although without this a rose loses its great charm; but continuous flowering is of so much importance, the prolonging of the beauties of the garden is so essential, that we think it of more consequence than any other feature. See a garden, liberally planted with summer roses, in a blaze of beauty in June or July, and it is a second paradise; but what is it before or after that period? The rose trees, bereft of adornment, are eyesores; they are, in fact, in the way until they bloom again. But see the same or another garden, judiciously supplied with continuous blooming roses of the nature of the common China, and we have them in flower the last of all our favourites. A frost that will kill down dahlias to the ground will only injure the flowers of the rose; the buds are scarcely damaged, and it is not an uncommon thing to see continuous blooming roses flowering in a mild autumn up to Christmas; and be it remembered that we have now hundreds of beautiful varieties possessing this valuable quality.

We now come to a quality which is of more importance than it at first seems—namely, thickness of petal. The advantages of this are, first, that, whatever be the colour, it is more dense than it can be in a thin petal; but apart from the superiority of colour, thick petals are more lasting than thin ones, and sun and winds have less effect upon them. A rose with thick petals will remain perfect for days, while thin ones are burnt or shrivelled in a few hours; and we hardly know of a more disagreeable fault than speedy decay. To see the ground strewn with petals in a few hours, and the plants disfigured by the remains of decayed flowers, is very far from pleasant, and this is inevitably the case with thinly petalled roses.

Upon the whole, the qualities of a good rose are—continuous blooming; thick, smooth-edged petals; flowers round, forming half or two-thirds of a ball, very double and full-faced, very symmetrical and imbricated; wood short-jointed; colour dense, that is, whatever its shade be, the colour decided; and, if striped or blotched, the stripes or blotches well defined.

SOME of the finest tapestry hanging in the world are now to be seen at the Kensington Museum. They formerly belonged to the Duke of Lerma, Prime Minister of Philip III. of Spain, and, though anterior in date to Gobelins tapestry, are in admirable preservation. The designs were drawn by Luca Giordano, and the hangings have been lent to the directors of the South Kensington Museum by the Count de Galve, brother of the Duke of Berwick and Alba, in whose family they have been for the last 300 years. Few things in the museum are better worth visiting than these magnificent specimens of high art.

A very interesting and instructive exhibition is now taking place in Paris, and attracts crowds. By means of a most artistic application of photography, the spectacle of Pompeii as it was eighteen centuries ago, and is now, is splendidly represented; the comparison is really curious; to complete the idea an eruption of Mount Vesuvius is exhibited, full of reality. It must have cost much study and labour to thus materially construct, as it were, a city and its life lost, so many ages ago. The Forum

appears as it must have been; the Street of the Tombs; the tragic theatre; the amphitheatre, the temples and baths, the villas and mansions of historical citizens, etc. In thus promingding among those imposing monuments, you with difficulty can believe in the illusion.

In the French flower markets may now be seen countrywomen offering bunches of white lily flowers for sale. A great number of these are purchased—the reader may think as political emblems—not so, they are to preserve in brandy. The petals are pulled off one by one and put into wide-mouthed pickle bottles containing ordinary eau-de-vie. They are kept in this way from year to year. When any one receives a cut or wound a brandied lily petal is produced, applied to the place, and fastened there with a bandage. Very powerful healing virtue is attributed to this floral plaster; and so general is the belief, that many grocers' shops keep in stock a glass jar of lily petals, which they retail at a sou apiece. But it is more probable the benefit proceeds rather from the stimulating action of the brandy than from any virtue extracted from the flower.

A LADY LAWYER.

ABOUT the year 1776 Nicolas Linguet, the celebrated Parisian journalist and lawyer, was at the height of his fame. He enjoyed a great reputation for his skill in getting up cases and surrounding them with such dramatic accessories as were likely to tell on the minds of excitable French judges. One day a beautiful lady, Madame de Bethune, came to ask his professional services in an action about some land, which she wished to bring against the Marshal Duke de Broglie, a great-grandfather of the present minister. Linguet had scarcely heard her to an end when he said:

"You are so lovely, madame, that your face is worth a speech in itself. What I'll do is this: I will write a speech, and you shall learn it by heart and then rehearse it to me. When you deliver it in court, you must be dressed in a light blue silk, the colour best suited to your style of beauty; and if you speak as I shall direct you, I defy any bench of Frenchmen to find hope for the defendant."

The event proved that Linguet knew human nature and his own countrymen well. Madame de Bethune turned out the most apt of scholars. She learned her speech thoroughly, and she delivered it with all the graces of style and manner that might have belonged to a finished actress. It lasted seven hours, and for seven hours she held her judges enthralled.

Midway in the speech, and probably with gallant care for the lady's fatigue, they adjourned to dinner, but it was already pretty evident which way the judgment inclined. Irrascibility would seem indigenous to the De Broglie family. During the interval that the sitting was suspended, the marshal sought out Linguet in the Pleaders' Hall, and, shaking his cane in his face, cried angrily:

"Just make your client speak her own words, and not yours, Master Linguet, or it will be the worse for you—do you hear?"

Linguet bowed low, and replied with ready wit: "My lord, you have taught Frenchmen never to fear their enemies, and I mean to remember the lesson."

The delicate piece of flattery more than counterbalanced the unpleasant determination it conveyed, for we hear of no unpleasant consequences to Maitre Linguet, and we are told that the beautiful Madame de Bethune carried her suit without a dissenting voice.

A WIDOW ON WIDOWS.—"I think it must be a jolly thing to be a young widow!" was the remark the other day, in a group of laughing girls. I think I remember saying such a thing myself in my girlish times. Do you know, girls, what it is to be a widow? It is to be ten times more open to comment and criticism than any demoiselle could possibly be. It is to have men gaze as you pass, first at your black dress and then at your widow's cap, until your sensitive nerves quiver under the infliction. It is to have one ill-natured person say: "I wonder how long she will wait before she marries again?" and another answer: "Until she gets a good chance, I suppose." It is now and then to meet the glance of real sympathy, generally from the poorest and humblest women you meet, and feel your eyes fill at the token, so rare, that it is, alas! unlooked for. It is to have your dear, fashionable friends console you after the following fashion: "Oh, well, it is a dreadful loss. We know you feel it, dear." And in the next breath: "You will be sure to marry again, and your widow's cap is very becoming to you." But it is more than this to be a widow. It is to miss the strong arm you have leaned upon, the true faith that you knew could never fail you, though all the world might forsake

you. It is to miss the dear voice that uttered your name with tenderness that none other could give it. It is to hear no more the well-known footsteps that you flew so gladly once to meet, to see no more the face that was so dear to your gaze, to feel no more the twining arms that folded you so lovingly; the dear eyes that, looking into your own, said plainly, whatever it might seem to others, yours was the fairest face earth held for him. It is to fight with a mighty sorrow as a man fights with the waves that overwhelm him, and to hold it at arms' length for a while, only to have, in the hours of loneliness and weakness, the torrent roll over you, while—poor storm-driven dove—you see your haven.

ACQUAINTANCES.

A GREAT many people find "acquaintances" a mere necessary evil of society. Indeed, I myself have often said, Give me a few friends who love me, and I want no mere acquaintances. I have changed my mind. The more of them we have the better.

To friends we may confide our troubles, and so make them grow. We may tell them our private affairs, which, ten to one, they tell again, being so sorry for us. We ask advice and get it, and follow it, and suffer in consequence.

Now an acquaintance is quite a different thing. Acquaintances stay in the parlour, and we go to see them, with our crimps all right, and our collar on. We smile, and talk of the weather and the fashions. It is very well to talk of the weather and the fashions and the last new novel, and all that—now and then. We forget our personal grievances—of which every one has plenty—for a while.

When Mrs. A. has been "sitting up for Alfred until one o'clock the night before," it is better that her acquaintance Mrs. B. should call than her friend Fanny. She would tell Fanny that Alfred's conduct was dreadful, and that she should go home to ma if he went on. But Mrs. B. asks, "How is Mr. A.?" and Mrs. A. says, "Very well, thank you." And Mrs. B. says, "I do hope we shall see you at our house together some evening soon." And Mrs. A. says, "We shall take a great deal of pleasure in coming." And then comes the thought, how dreadful it would be to be talked about by acquaintances!

Careful Mrs. C. might take a friend into her bedroom, and dilate upon the crimes of omission of which Polly, the chambermaid, has been guilty. She might rehearse her last scene with the cook, and weep over a spoiled pudding; but an acquaintance causes her to don her best cap, and talk for half an hour, and she rings the bell and tells Polly to bring a glass of water, and smilingly offers a fan, and spares the acquaintance the treat that a friend would have had, and is much improved in nerves thereby.

In one word, acquaintances are good. They are not led into the midst of family arrangements. They are not treated to wash-day luncheons. They do not see shabby morning-gowns and crimping pins. They are a fine sedative for all sorts of agonies.

Even a case of jilting is better treated by a call from an acquaintance full of the last fancy fair than by a sympathetic visit from Arabella.

And my advice is, know as many people as you can. Heaven bless friends, and Heaven keep us from imposing on them our troubles, our poorest meals, our shabbiest clothes, and the mysteries of the ménage. They don't deserve it from us.

But thank Providence for acquaintances also; for in their company we try to look our best, behave our nicest, put our best foot foremost, and exhibit the best, and not the worst qualities of our relatives. From them we never ask advice, which is generally a dreadful thing to get, and when one is quite upset and ready to slap somebody, nothing is more surely "indicated," as the doctors say, with a view to speedy recovery than a call from a person of such a degree of intimacy that she must wait in the parlour until we put on a long back curl and a pair of bracelets.

R. M.

From school returns that have been made, it appears that in a Bavarian district, containing 1,500 children, 36 per cent. were found to have blue eyes, 30 gray, and 34 brown; 47 per cent. had light hair, 49 brown, and 4 black; while 81 per cent. had fair complexions, and 19 dark.

JUDGING from experience, the comet which has just left us will again burst upon the gaze of the people of these islands about the year 2158. Switzerland intends to commemorate the appearance of the late comet. The prospects of the vintage are so good that the wines will probably be called after the comet year.

EXTENT OF WOODS IN ENGLAND.—It seems from the official statistics that of the whole surface of England and Wales less than 4 per cent., or only

1,453,000 acres out of a total of 37,319,000 acres, is occupied by woods, coppices and plantations. Treating the three Ridings of Yorkshire as separate counties, Sussex is the only county which returns more than 100,000 acres of wood, nearly 11 per cent. of its area being thus clothed. The woods of Hampshire are next in magnitude, embracing some 87,000 acres, but forming only 8 per cent. of that county's area. Kent follows with 78,000 acres of woodland, while the adjoining county of Surrey, although returning only some 48,000 acres of wood, shows almost as high a percentage as its neighbour, Sussex, since very nearly one-tenth of its whole area is thus employed. These four counties, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, appear to possess a much larger extent of woodland relatively to their size than any other area in England.

HOT AIR AND COOL ROOMS.—Because, when the air of the streets marks 30 or 40 degrees on the Fahrenheit scale, a room over-warmed by a fire can be cooled by opening the windows, the average British householder adopts the ready conclusion that whenever a room feels hot the way to cool it is to let in the external air. Accordingly, in these piping times, he, and still more often she, opens the windows on the sunny side of the house, and lets in air of a temperature varying from 100 to 120 degrees, or so. Then, because in a very short time the room, naturally enough, becomes much hotter than it was, it is considered that the windows are not opened widely enough, and the supposed error being remedied, a still larger quantity of hot air is then let in. And so we find Materfamilias sitting with a very light muslin upon her frame, and a great deal of perspiration upon her upper lip, her face the colour of an Orleans plum, and her condition of mind to the last degree dejected, simply because she persists in disregarding the most elementary principles of natural philosophy. Tell her that if she will open the windows on the shady side of the house only, and keep the others closely shut, her dwelling will be at least not hotter than the shady side of the street, whereas by her arrangement it acquires the heat of the sunny side. We tell her also that if her house be large and the inmates few, she may live in a delightful state of coolness by only opening the windows at night, and keeping them closed during the day. Her house will then be some 10 or 15 degrees lower in temperature than the streets, and convey very much the refreshing effects of a cool bath upon entering it. We tell her all this much, and she is very much interested. At our next visit we find every window open, and the house full of red-hot air. "It stands to reason," she says, triumphantly, "that you cannot possibly cool a house without plenty of ventilation."

VALUE OF LAND.—The Walton-upon-Trent estate, situated near Burton-upon-Trent, Derbyshire, comprising a residence and several first-class farms, covering a freehold area of 1,747 acres, was sold recently at the auction mart by Messrs. Beadle to Mr. Richard Ratcliff, of Walton Hall, Burton-upon-Trent, for 120,000l., equal to 83 years' purchase on the rental.

A GREAT TOURIST.—A Denver (Colorado) paper notes the return to that city of Miss Mattie Gaylord, of Boston, "the great tourist of the North-West and the Pacific coast," and says: "Five years ago she and her sister made this city their initial point of departure for a wonderful journey of 13,000 miles, which they accomplished with their own carriage, visiting every camp, settlement, village and city in the Territories and on the Pacific coast. Miss Gaylord is now en route to Australia, where she will spend the next two years in a similar journey."

ALL the influence which women enjoy in society—their right to the exercise of that maternal care which forms the first and most indelible species of education; the wholesome restraint which they possess over the passions of mankind; their power of protecting us when young, and cheering us when old—depend so entirely upon their personal purity, and the charm which it casts around them, that to insinuate a doubt of its real value is willfully to remove the broadest corner-stone on which civil society rests, with all its benefits and all its comforts.

NEW NAVAL MONUMENT.—There has just been completed at Greenwich Hospital a massive and conspicuously placed stone monument, at the western corner of the hospital grounds, immediately opposite the Ship hotel, erected by the surviving officers and men to the memory of those comrades of Her Majesty's ships Caracra, Miranda, Harrier, Esk, and Eclipse who fell in the war in New Zealand in 1863-64. In the centre, on a prominent part, are the words "New Zealand," and in gilt letters on the four sides are given the object of the monument and the names and rank held by those whose memory and deeds are sought to be preserved.

DR. PRIESTLEY, THE DISCOVERER OF OXYGEN.

THE centenary of the discovery of oxygen by Dr. Priestley was celebrated at Birmingham, on Saturday, the 1st instant, by the unveiling of a statue of the great chemist. Eighty-three years ago Joseph Priestley, then the minister of the principal Unitarian congregation in Birmingham, was ignominiously driven from the town, amid the execrations of a mob who saw in him only the theological controversialist and the apologist of the French revolutionists.

The statue, which is the work of Mr. F. J. Williamson, a pupil of Foley, is executed in white (so-called) Sicilian marble, and is 8 ft. 6 in. in height. The Doctor, habited in the costume of his period, with wig, ruffles, knee-breeches, buckled shoes and large cuffed and lapped coat, is represented in the act of making the experiment which resulted in the discovery of oxygen gas. In his right hand is a lens, or burning-glass, the focus of which is directed upon a little tube and dish resting upon a rustic pedestal at his left hand, and containing presumably the red precipitate of mercury, from which he first succeeded in evolving "dephlogisticated air." The attitude is graceful, easy and expressive, and the face, modelled from an authentic portrait, is considered by members of the Priestley family an excellent likeness.

The unveiling ceremony was held at 1 o'clock in the day, in the presence of a large assembly, when Professor Huxley, in the name of the subscribers, formally and briefly presented the statue to the town, amid the cheers of the spectators.

The Mayor (Alderman Chamberlain) having acknowledged the gift on the part of the Corporation, the party adjourned to the Town Hall, for the purpose of hearing an address from Professor Huxley on the life and labours of Dr. Priestley.

Professor Huxley said that they had just received at his hands the memorial which had been erected to Dr. Priestley by his admirers in that town. He learnt from Leeds that like honour was being paid to Priestley's memory in that great and important city, and he knew that in the United States large preparations had been making for the celebration of that anniversary. It might be proper, therefore, to ask their patience for a short time while he laid before them the grounds and considerations which had led the fellow-countrymen of Priestley, after a lapse of seventy years from the time of his death, to do this honour to a man who was neither a prince nor a statesman nor a general, and was not, in fact, one of those to whom mankind delighted to erect statues either before or after their death. But they were there to do honour to a man every one of whose political writings had in it the true ring of freedom. They were, he thought, to honour Priestley as one of those who were called by a great poet of antiquity "that band of men who are the swift bearers of the lamp of life"—that lamp which was lighted in the childhood of mankind at the Promethean altar of science, and which had been handed down by him and such as he from generation to generation.

Priestley was born in the year 1733, and the great abilities of the boy led to his being early sent to an academy for Dissenters at Daventry. In that academy every question was thrown open, the leading professors took opposite sides, everything was discussed, and Priestley even then showed the bent of his young mind. Undoubtedly what germ of scientific taste lay in him was fostered and encouraged to a very great degree by his meeting with Benjamin Franklin, who was at that time resident in this country. Stimulated by him, Priestley wrote his history of electric discovery, and being launched in that course of inquiry while resident at Leeds, he commenced his researches upon the nature of air. Those researches grew; circumstances became more favourable to his scientific pursuits. He became an honoured and cherished inmate of the house of Lord Shelburne, afterwards



[THE STATUE OF DR. PRIESTLEY.]

Marquis of Lansdowne, at Bowood, near Calne, in Wiltshire, and remained there for seven years, during which time he made some of his most important discoveries, and particularly that of which to-day they were celebrating the centenary anniversary—namely the existence of oxygen gas in the composition of atmospheric air. After that Priestley migrated to Birmingham, and there carried on his philosophical investigations.

Subsequently the Birmingham riots took place, and Priestley had to fly for his life. He first went to London, but there met with the cold shoulder even from those who should have been his best friend in distress—the Fellows of the learned societies to which he belonged. Discovering then that England was no longer a place in which he could pursue his philosophical occupations, he migrated to America, and spent the rest of his useful existence at Northumberland, in the United States. He died in 1804.

Having made this brief summary of the conditions under which Priestley worked, Professor Huxley said he wished briefly to put before the meeting what was the value of his life's work to those who look upon it from outside the region of the particular denomination to which he belonged. Priestley was a man of almost endless energy and versatility. His principal lines of activity might be divided into three. In the first place, he was a man of science and a chemist; in the second place, he was a philosopher and a writer; and, in the third place, he was a politician. But he proposed to put

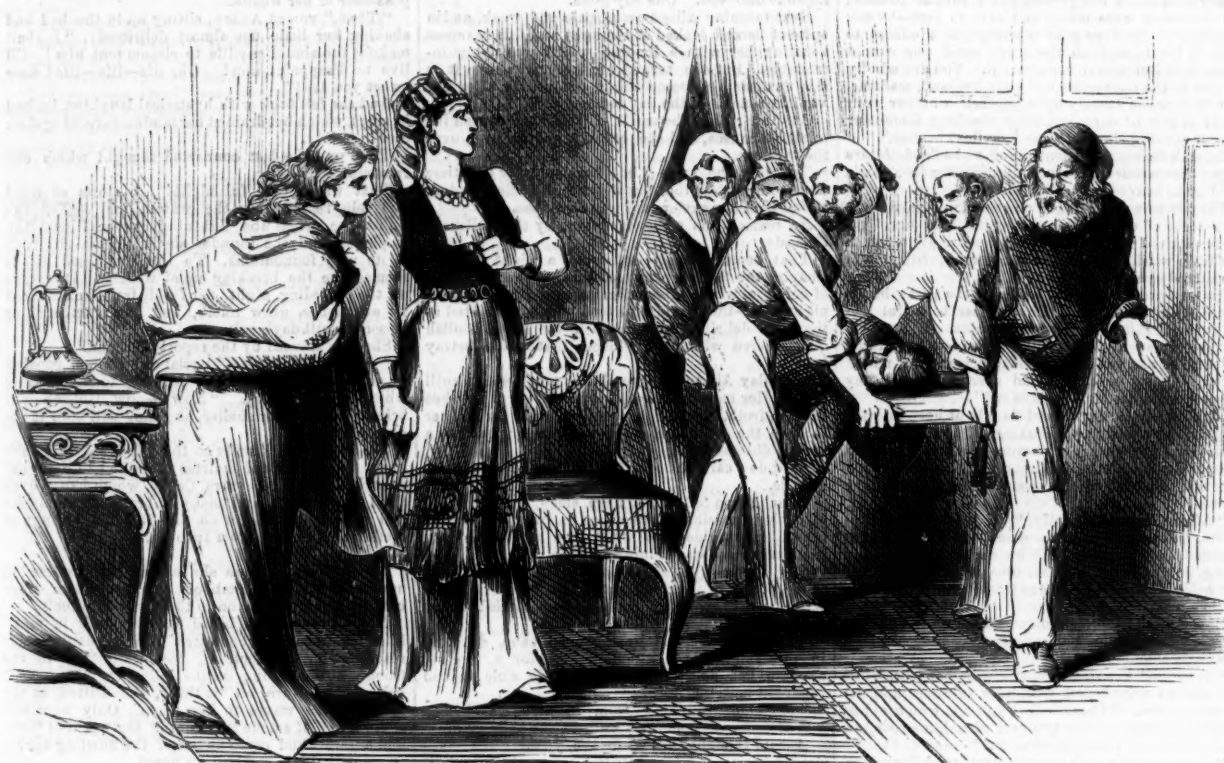
before them those considerations that struck him in each of these directions. In order to estimate what Priestley did for chemistry he must carry them back to the last century and show them what was then the condition of chemical science. There was no one who believed, and hardly any one who suspected, that the doctrines of the ancients that air, water and fire are elements, was other than true. The researches of Boyle and Hales had tended to define the qualities of air, had tended to show that there were different kinds; but that there was anything like the multiplicity and diversity of elementary bodies which we now comprehend under the name of gases was entirely unsuspected. But immediately at the commencement of the second half of the last century, about the year 1755, a most remarkable man, a young Scotch doctor—Dr. Black—had made investigations into the nature of what was called fixed air; and he had shown that this substance could be combined with such matter as limes, and such as alkalis, and could be got out again from them by combustion, that it was an acid substance, capable of neutralizing the strongest alkali, and that this paved the way for an air-like body, an aeriform, elastic substance which would play the part of an independent existence—totally distinct from common air.

Then, a little later, in 1766, Cavendish, one of the most remarkable men who adorned the science of this or any other country, in a series of researches, showed the nature of sundry other gases. Shortly after Cavendish worked, Priestley commenced his inquiries, and if we look upon those as contributions to our knowledge of chemical fact, they were something surprising, not only in themselves, but still more when we remember that he was a man devoid of academical training; that he had not the means and appliances at his disposal that Cavendish had. In fact, he scaled the walls of science without preparation and from the outside. The number of discoveries he made was something marvellous and without limit. He trebled the number of gases known before his time, and gave a precision and definition to our knowledge of their character of which no one before had any knowledge. It was on the 1st of August, 1774, that he made that discovery with which his name is more especially connected—the discovery of that which at the present day is known as oxygen gas.

It was not until six months afterwards that the discoverer knew the real nature of his discovery. It was then taken up and enlarged by other persons—notably Lavoisier, the French chemist, who shabbily ignored Priestley's discovery.

In conclusion, Professor Huxley proceeded to point out where Priestley's value lay. It lay, he said, exactly in this—that he was the exponent of all those tendencies which had brought about the present state of things; that in all respects, on all occasions, he was the champion of free thought. In theology he was the champion of the restrictions on ecclesiastical encroachments, the champion of political freedom, and the champion and great advocate of physical science. Indeed, it was to him, and to such men as he, the speaker fearlessly asserted, that the great and undoubtedly beneficent change which had passed over the face of the world since the eighteenth century was due.

RETURN OF THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS.—A troop of twenty-one agricultural labourers, of whom only ten were members of the imposing band of nearly a hundred who left their homes in the eastern counties some weeks ago, broke up on the morning of the 10th, instant at Halifax. Five of the men remained in Halifax with good prospects of regular employment. The sixteen others, eight of whom are single men, returned home by rail. The horse and van in which money was collected throughout the march were also despatched home to Newmarket by rail.



["WRECKED."]

THE
SWEET SISTERS OF INCHVARRA;
OR,
THE VAMPIRE OF THE GUILLAMORES.

CHAPTER XI.

Though at times my spirit fails me,
And the bitter tear-drops fall,
Though my lot is hard and lonely,
Yet I hope—I hope through all.

Mrs. Norton.

AILEEN opened her languid blue eyes at last to sentient feeling.

She had come up from the depths of a slumber more profound than any she had ever enjoyed before. There was a real mist floating about, and there was the hollow boom of the ocean in her ears. She put out her hand and felt the bed empty.

"Vara!" said Aileen, lazily.

No one answered.

She thought that the real mist was dawn and the boom was the sea under Inchvarra Castle, and she wondered that Vara should have got up and gone out for her bath without waiting for her.

Had she been ill? What were these harrowing half-visions which were dimly struggling in her brain? She sprang up with a loud cry.

Through the paling mist her eyes caught unfamiliar objects all around her—and like an arrow through her brain shot memory.

A terror as of death fell upon her—she wrung her hands together.

And what was this upon her hand?

A wedding ring!

She gazed with throbbing eyes; the cold dews of fear and horror began to cover her forehead; the wild, beautiful dreams of the past night recurred to her, when she had seen herself a sublime martyr daring death rather than consenting to a forced marriage. What, then, was this?

She tore it off and dashed it across the room.

Then faintness overcame her, and she fell upon her pillow gasping for breath.

"Madame," said a low-pitched voice beside her, "did you call?"

Aileen uttered a smothered scream, for she had thought herself alone.

The coal-black eyes and pale olive face of the foreign woman were before her.

"Where am I? Where am I?" sobbed Aileen, wildly.

"Does madame wish to dress?" inquired the woman, tonelessly.

"Why do you call me 'madame'? I am Aileen Guillamore! I want Vara—where is Vara?" gasped the unfortunate child, with rising excitement.

"Madame, it is my master's wish to see you. Will you receive him on dishabille?"

Aileen glanced at herself with affrighted eyes. She was attired in a night-robe of finest linen, lavishly embroidered. She glanced at the ice-cold face of her attendant, and her very lips whitened.

"Dress me instantly," she said, ready to die with apprehension; "and for Heaven's sake keep this place locked, if you have any pity in your bosom!"

Something like a mocking smile lurked in the eyes of the Spanish Moor. She silently went to the door and turned the key.

Then Aileen slid from the low, elegant couch to the soft fleece which was spread before it, and looked about bewildered for the well-worn garments which seemed a part of herself.

The attendant silently placed before her naked feet a pair of fairy gilt shoes, and flung over her shoulders a rich Indian-wrought dressing-robe, upon which was worked a wonderful tracery in gold thread of tropical fruits and flowers.

Aileen knotted the cord of this robe round her waist with trembling fingers, and then flew to one of two windows, which were covered by pale-gray velvet curtains, lined with rose silk.

The chamber was somewhat remarkable, being round in shape, very small, hung with pink and gray damask, and carpeted with lions' skins.

The two windows were mere loops, somewhat like the portholes of a ship; and the view which Aileen beheld when she raised the curtain was not less desolate than that seen from a ship mid-ocean.

She beheld the sea dashing far below in white surf upon a rocky shore almost immediately beneath the window; no sign of land, no distant haze to mark a neighbouring shore—nothing but the dull waves everywhere.

About ten feet beneath the window she could see part of a strong iron balcony, which appeared to run along or round the building, and it somewhat impeded her view of what was below.

Aileen drew back pale and frightened, and saw her attendant holding aside the curtain of the opposite window, with a derisive smile, for her to look through it also.

The thick, round pane of glass was drawn aside, and, putting her head out, Aileen saw the same desolate scene; the sea dashing in far below—a landless horizon—dull ocean—waves everywhere.

Here also the balcony ran beneath the window. Looking up, she beheld the wall looming giddily up-

ward, pierced here and there with the same narrow loophole windows, and terminating at last in a heavy stone projection.

She uttered a cry of dismay, and turned to the woman.

"What, in the name of Heaven, is this dreadful place?" cried she.

In the woman's place stood her abductor—pale, triumphant, resolute, with folded arms and mockingly lowered head, as if to meet the full torrent of her wrath.

Aileen shrieked, and darted like a bird to the voluminous damask hangings which hid the grim nakedness of the walls, where, enveloping herself in their folds, her white little face flashed out, fairly glittering with indignation.

"How dare you—how dare you come here?" she exclaimed, almost voicelessly.

The man smiled as one smiles at the playful anger of a canary.

"Dare!" echoed he, with curved eyebrows. "What a strange word that is between man and wife!"

"Your wife!" said Aileen, while the wild, white-rose face shrank and quivered. "So that was not all a dream last night? You stole me from my home, you drugged me, you went through some unholy farce that you call marriage, and you dare to call us man and wife?"

"It is true that I had the honour of bearing you from that ruin, Inchvarra Castle, last night," said the man, his cool eyes lighting up with admiration in spite of himself; "and that we were married with your full consent—"

"Villain!" gasped Aileen, "breathe that falsehood again, and I will make this place ring with my denial of it. See!" and, with white, scolding lips wreathed into a smile, she pointed to something that glittered across the apartment among the dusky depths of a lion's skin; "take up your wedding-ring—Aileen Guillamore will never wear it until the soul has left her body!"

The gentleman stepped lightly to where the ring lay, took it up, pressed it to his lips, and slipped it upon the little finger of a hand as soft and delicate as that of a marquise.

"Thanks," said he, gaily. "While I am absent from my sweet little bride I shall wear this as a remembrance of the tie which binds us together. You have thrown it away in wrath, madame," continued he, with a menace hidden beneath his velvet tones, as the serpent coils itself to sleep amid flowers "but you shall yet sue for it with tears."

Aileen gazed at him in mute terror.

"You were married last night," he continued, "by a duly authorised clergyman, and a special licence; the witnesses were many, and easy to find—by me. You cannot disprove your marriage, if I choose to hold it legal; and, on the other hand, you cannot prove it if I choose to repudiate it. You are wholly subject to the convenience of your husband, madame, and it depends largely upon yourself whether your lot is bright or dark—whether Geoffrey Rochester is your adoring slave or your merciless master."

Aileen's flashing eyes sank, filled, and a flood of tears began to rain down her innocent, childlike face, while her bosom heaved with affright.

There was a cold silence on the man's part while this storm of emotion was sweeping over her. He scarce looked at her, but gazed frowningly through the little window at the desolate waters, with a half-abstracted eye.

He was aroused by the touch of the girl's hands upon his arms—by the vision of her beautiful and artless eyes raised impudently to him.

"For Heaven's sake, kill me at once!" uttered Aileen, her heart in her quivering voice; "cut me off before I know what sin and sorrow are; let my memory be white for Var's sake!"

Geoffrey Rochester looked fixedly at her—and she was a picture well worth looking at.

His hard face changed, his contracted pupils dilated as he looked down upon the girl in her lovely innocence, his chilled lips warmed into a tenderer curve.

"Aileen," he said, gently, "we two are bound together now—our fortunes are one. Why, then, fight against the inevitable? Why speak of that ugly thing, death, in the blossom-time of life? Submit, my wife, and try"—he panted this breathlessly—"try to love me!"

She started back from him with a cry of mingled wrath, scorn and despair; a cry that rang through the little chamber wildly.

"Go—go!" she shrieked, stamping her foot, while her cheeks waxed now pale, now crimson, and her eyes shot fire. "Dastard that you are, who could be false to honour and the betrayer of helplessness, go, and pollute my presence no more!"

"Your words are sharp, girl," returned Rochester, grimly, "and since you repulse me I go. But when I return"—and his angry eyes lit up with fiery satisfaction—"you may possibly wish to eat those words. Meantime I leave you in the care of Zolande, my faithful servant, who will see that Mrs. Rochester does nothing to disgrace her new position."

Without another glance he bowed and retired.

Aileen rushed to the couch and flung herself sobbing and trembling on her knees beside it with her face buried in her hands.

A storm of emotions swept through the hitherto untried heart of the young girl, which for the time threatened to destroy the delicate tenement of her brave soul.

Passionate scorn—anger, horror, wonder, grief, despair, all in their turn swept the wild strings of her soul as a fierce hand wakes the harp to tumultuous chords; but, worthy of the old Celtic race from which she had sprung, there was no fear in the heart of Aileen Guillemore.

Danger was before her, and there might be death; but she was determined that death should come before dishonour!

She saw him once more that day. One glimpse she had of his delicate and patrician face, graced as it was with the evil fascination of Lucifer, as he was rowed past her window in a boat.

As he caught the sheen of the golden head at the pane, he bared his locks, and kissed the ring on his hand, as it would seem in pitiless determination to remind her of her helplessness.

Aileen left the window with a groan, and her hands held to her wildly beating heart.

"Zolande," she said, when the Spanish Moor brought her dinner, "what is this place?"

"It is a lighthouse," answered Zolande, respectfully.

"I have nothing I can call my own," cried Aileen, clasping her hands, "but I think you surely have a woman's heart, Zolande! Pity me, then—let me escape—help me to escape in some boat, for the love of Heaven, for I never married the man who keeps me here, and I am not his wife!"

"Impossible, madame," answered the attendant, in the same toneless, gliding voice, and she left the room.

"So be it," muttered Aileen, "you have spoken my doom."

She looked at the viands (and considering the disadvantage of being almost beyond civilized ken they were most tempting), and then, seizing the vessels, she ran to the loop hole and emptied them into the sea.

Zolande, evidently admiring madame's appetite, bore off the tray anon.

At tea-time the same ceremony was performed and Zolande deceived. One day gone.

Next morning Aileen awoke, pale and weak, and in spite of herself looked at the light and dainty repast awaiting her with a longing which was almost intolerable. But she turned her face away from it as if it was some noisome thing, and cast it after her vanished meals of the day before.

At dinner time the smell of the food caused intolerable nausea, and she quickly got rid of it over the window.

Tea-time the same; but her hands by this time were so nerveless that the delicate little Savoy dish which held her oyster paté went over too.

No remark was made, however, by the well-brad Zolande.

That second night—oh, what a night it was! Imagine the tearing pangs of hunger—the momenta of collapse, when exhaustion seemed like an awful nightmare—the craving for food which amounted at times to delirium, all of which the noble, foolish girl suffered without a whisper that would betray herself.

Next day Aileen was too ill to leave her bed until noon. Her morning repast, all made up of relishes light as froth, was set beside her. She turned her face to the wall and wept for hunger, but not a morsel did she taste.

Zolande carried out the untouched tray in silence.

Then Aileen fell into a deep sleep, and dreamed of such impossible banquettes as mocked the gnawings of Barmecide, and when she awoke the red glare of sunset was shining into the room.

She dragged herself from her tossed bed, and with moans of anguish staggered to the window with her dinner, which had just been carried in, hot and enticing.

While she crouched by the open pane, drinking in the salt breeze, which seemed for a time to appease her delicious blood, Zolande stole in and regarded her stonily.

"Madame is pining from inaction," said she. "Will madame come for a walk on the balcony?"

A wild thought shot up in the young girl's maddening brain. "A leap into the sea would be a short way out of my misery!" and she eagerly complied.

Wrapped warmly into a quilted silk cloak, lined with ermine, she was supported by the faithful spy down a short flight of steps, and out by a narrow door upon the balcony, which had been constructed for look-out purposes.

Here, while walking round and round the tower, with the ocean grinding and growing at its foundation, and the sea-birds circling with sharp cries round its turrets, Aileen, always on the watch for a place where the leap might terminate in deep water (she had a youthful aversion to mutilating even her lifeless body), had the felicity of seeing a goodly portion of her yesterday's rations bespattering the iron railings and the flags of the balcony, and that Zolande passed and repassed this monument of her sacrifice with an unnatural lack of observation.

A startling suspicion occurred to the young girl. "What?" she thought, while a pang of hitherto unknown terror assailed her; "does she know that I am starving myself to death, and is she instructed to allow me to do it?"

The terror was not of death by her own hand, but of death permitted by her enemies!

"Why," thought Aileen, woman-like, "if they want me to die, am I not an idiot to please them?"

This acted as a shock, much required, to her morbid desire for death; she thought no more of throwing herself over the balcony.

When she was back in her room for the night she threw herself on her couch, and, despite her exhaustion, and the raving hunger which now possessed her (for the fresh air had aroused all her sinking powers into active requirement again), she pondered the probable intentions of the man who had stolen her from her friends more carefully than she had yet done.

It seemed too true that he had gone through some ceremony with her, which he could prove as a legal marriage, as circumstances required. Had he married her for her reputed wealth? Then he must certainly have ascertained beyond a doubt that she was an heiress before he would venture upon the bold step of abducting her.

If, then, she was indeed an heiress, as old Denis had said, what possible advantage could this man Rochester gain by her death?

Like a knell came the thought to Aileen that her husband would inherit her wealth.

He had said she would yet sue for the ring she had flung away with scorn.

What did he threaten?

The girl tortured herself with surmise, but could come to no conclusion excepting one: Rochester had spoken in such a strain in order to frighten her into

committing the act which would make him the legal possessor of her wealth.

"Then," vowed Aileen, sitting up in the bed and shaking her little fist almost deliriously, "I shall make it the aim of my life to circumvent him! I'll live to disappoint him! Oh, life—life—life! how sweet you are!"

And she fell back with hysterical laughter, bathed in tears, which but drained her famine-fevered system more terribly.

This was the last connected thought which she remembered.

That was a dreadful night! A storm of wind and rain roared over the waters and lashed the lighthouse, while the lightning quivered past the loopholes, and the thunder shook the sea-girl rock to its very foundations. To the distracted girl it seemed like the breaking up of worlds. At last, as on the preceding night, her feeble frame, exhausted by abstinence, grew numb, and she slumbered or swooned until daybreak.

She was aroused by the report of a gun.

"A ship in distress!" exclaimed Aileen, rousing in an instant from supreme lethargy to an alertness which was startling. "Now!—now Heaven will bring them here for shelter, and they will help me to escape!"

She staggered dizzily to the window. Well she knew these sounds of distress; for she had lived her short lifetime in Inchvarra Castle, which hangs over the hungry main, and many a brave three-master had got her death-blow on the Skeleton, a range of reefs which ran out from Inchvarra.

A ship in distress!

Yes, indeed! There she lay, a mere useless log upon the whirling comb of breakers which were bearing her broadside on to the lighthouse rock.

Masts snapped, the broad sails hanging in mutilated confusion in the water, like so many hands reaching for the bottom, now wallowing in the trough, now spinning on the billow-top, like a dead fish about to turn on its back, she drifted, at the mercy of the waves to her doom. Only now and again a puff of smoke came out of the world of foam, and a faint thud came up out of the howling uproar to show that life was still on board.

The drift of the rain and the swirl of the gale in Aileen's face, as she gazed on the wild spectacle, cooled and steadied her feverish brain. For a time she forgot her own sufferings in watching the appalling sight.

The wreck was now almost under the lighthouse. Every monster wave that surged up and spent itself in a Titanic blow and a maelstrom of foam upon the rocks threatened to dash her in splinters against the black, vertical wall.

The first streak of a stormy dawn came across the writhing sea and touched with ironic beauty the shattered bulwark and the glistening deck of the wreck.

Figures could now be seen clinging to every available scrap of the wholesale ruin had left them to cling to. One giant form stood conspicuous among the rest, lashed to the stump of the foremast, and his hoarse voice sounded through a speaking-trumpet, as he appeared to encourage the others.

"Hold on all!" shouted this voice, and in that wild moment what a thrill seized the heart of the watching girl at the sound of the words pealing through the hurdling elements—the battling of a human being with a thousand deaths!

"Thou Ruler of the tempest, save them!" cried Aileen, clasping her hands, while her cheeks blanched with awe.

Next moment the ship struck on the black wall with a crash that actually made the lighthouse tremble.

A succession of fearful shouts rose from the despairing mariners, and as the doomed ship rocked dizzily back into the vortex, like a man about to drop senseless, Aileen turned away, heart-sick, and wept.

A few minutes afterwards, Zolande rushed in, her face pallid and disturbed.

"Quick, madame!" said she, peremptorily; "dress yourself, and come with me."

The sight of her awakened all Aileen's sufferings in full force.

"Get me some food!" cried she, eagerly. "Go, Zolande, quick—quick!"

Zolande stared.

"Madame—at this time?"

"Some food—some food! I am dying of hunger!" cried Aileen, wildly; and indeed the very thought of it was now an unendurable spur to her appetite.

"You know I have eaten nothing for three days!" she shrieked, stamping her foot, while her hot little hands worked together convulsively.

"You must follow me to another apartment first, madame," observed the woman, with cold derision; "for the master of the lighthouse has demanded this room on the instant. My master will be furious at

the liberty taken with his wife's comfort, but it cannot be—"

"I command you to bring me some food!" cried poor Aileen, who had never spoken with authority in her life before, but who now advanced upon Zolande fiercely, with her eyes blazing.

"Yes, madame—yes!" said the woman, a dark flush crossing her countenance; "but I beseech you to throw something around you before your chamber is invaded by strangers."

She left the room.

Aileen could do nothing, think of nothing but the blessed food she had so long denied.

She pressed both her hands to her palpitating heart, and sometimes she moaned with pain, and sometimes she laughed with delicious joy.

But suddenly she recalled herself, and pressed her forehead hard against the cold glass of her window. "Let me think—let me think," she muttered. "I have only a few minutes, and may never have another chance. Bread—bread—why should I waste my thoughts on that?—plenty of time for that afterward. This room is to be occupied by strangers—doubtless some of the rescued—ah! ah! How long Zolande is. Some of the rescued—yes; and if I could leave a secret letter for them to read!"

She eagerly looked about her, then snatched up a nail which had dropped out of the damask hangings, and with it scratched upon the paint of the window-ledge these incoherent words:

"CAPTAIN OF THE WRECKED SHIP:—Don't leave the lighthouse until you have assisted me to escape with you. I am seventeen—stolen from home. I saw you from this window, and you are brave. Look for
YELLOW HAIR."

She had just finished this singular appeal when she heard the velvet tread of Zolande as she came up the winding stone stairs from the regions below.

Aileen arranged the curtain over the window, and crept to the opposite side of the chamber.

Zolande entered with a glass of wine and a biscuit.

"Madame had better not eat much at first," said she, drily; "food is dangerous after madame's long fast."

Aileen seized the refreshments out of her hands. Poor little soul, her eyes shone with satisfaction.

When she had finished, and Zolande was hastily fastening the purple robe about her, she began to cry.

"Oh, what a wicked girl I was to think of destroying myself!" sobbed she. "Will Heaven ever forgive me?"

Zolande affected not to hear, yet one might have seen a strange expression upon her countenance. Heavy steps were now audible on the stairs.

"Come, madame," said the attendant, seizing her by the hand; "the rescued sailors are about to enter."

But Aileen was determined not to be spirited away until her secret design had been accomplished.

Hastily drawing back from Zolande's clasp, she exclaimed, in a tone of displeasure:

"Let them wait until I am prepared. Where is my shawl? I cannot go through the draughty tower without that."

"Madame's shawl is here," answered the woman, and indeed her arms were full of Aileen's belongings, and she was trying as fast as possible to remove all traces of the chamber having been occupied by a lady.

"My handkerchief?" cried Aileen, feeling under the pillow of her bed, and, oh, how she wished now that her name had been written in the corner of it!

"Madame's handkerchief is here," answered Zolande, whose eyes were sparkling with anger. "Does madame wish to remain here in order to see some half-clothed sailors?"

Aileen deigned no reply, but advanced towards the door, carefully timing her steps until the strangers were upon the threshold, and then she calmly stood aside and gave them room to pass in.

Zolande darted to her, flung the shawl over her head and shoulders, and then stood tall and firm before her, in a last resolute attempt to conceal her.

But Aileen rearranged the shawl, and that in spite of her.

First came a grizzly-bearded old man in a red woollen night-cap and linsey shirt, who marshalled the way. This gentleman Aileen guessed to be the keeper of the lighthouse.

Next came a group of tars, streaming salt water at every step, and bearing upon a plank a giant form which seemed to be that of the captain.

Last came two square-built young men of preternaturally villainous physique, who had in charge the ship's papers and other valuables.

Aileen gazed at the man to whom she had addressed her appeal.

A giant indeed! As he lay extended, his coat stripped off and his chest and throat bared, the young

girl almost trembled at the sight of that mighty frame.

His great head was thrown back, water dripped from his short jetty locks, from his enormous moustache, from his magnificent flowing beard.

His face, a brown, strong and honest face, was gray from loss of blood, and his sharp white teeth were buried in his under lip with an expression of acute suffering.

As he passed through the doorway he lifted his black eyes and saw, as in a dream, the small, sweet face of a fairy girl, half enveloped in a shawl, gazing at him wistfully, and then turning and gazing with singular intensity at a window, and then seeking his eyes again.

"Thunder!" muttered the captain, and swooned with pain.

CHAPTER XII.

Experience teacheth us
That resolution's a sole help at need.

Shakespeare.

WITH hope thrilling through every vein did Aileen suffer herself to be led up the corkscrew stairs to the room above that which she had occupied—a room, however, which to her intense indignation showed signs of having been occupied by the man who claimed her as his wife—namely, Geoffrey Rochester.

Some attempt had been made to redeem the disadvantages incident to such rude architecture by considerable elegance in the furnishings; but Aileen saw nothing beyond the fact that her pseudo-lord had been there.

His dressing-gown lay across the arm of a velvet easy-chair; his smoking-cap hung on the fringed curtains which draped the naked stone walls; his nargileh, or Turkish pipe, with its porcelain jug containing scented waters, graced the table, and a gauntlet was thrown, as if in defiance, upon the small Moorish bed.

Aileen's blue eyes flashed as she stood surveying these obstacles to her contentment.

"Take them away!" said she, imperiously.

Zolande carefully folded the garment into an open travelling-case, and carefully folded Aileen's garments above it.

Aileen's face crimsoned with rage, and the water rushed to her eyes, but she did not dispute the point.

As soon as the attendant's back was turned, however, she flew to the case, dragged out Mr. Rochester's dressing-gown, and stuffing it out at the loophole, along with the elegant nargileh and the gauntlet, sent them all to Flanders.

Having thus satisfied her involuntary detestation of the man who had injured her, she tried to forget that she was conjugally sharing his room, and prepared herself to wait patiently for the result of the unknown captain's visit to her room.

The result was long in coming.

The storm lasted three days, and then she saw a boatload of the wrecked sailors leaving the lighthouse rock for the unseen land.

She could see the boat crawling off like a fly on the waters, but, as to making out faces, she might as well have tried to discern the features of the Man in the Moon.

She could hope, however, that the captain had not gone, from the fact that she was still kept out of her room.

Was he very ill? Was he recovering? Was he dying?

Not for worlds would she have betrayed the least interest to Zolande, lest that sphinx should turn lynx, and see all.

And meantime that faithful keeper of Geoffrey Rochester's interests was making herself mistress of the whole situation, with her usual quiet cunning.

Weeks began to pass away: Aileen's hopes grew dim—faded wholly—became almost a dream of the past.

She began to neglect her food again.

Three passed by. She was sitting listlessly at the open pane of her little window one morning, with her head out sniffing the sea air, that reminded her sadly of her lost days of liberty at dear Inchvarra, when looking down she beheld a sight that made her heart jump.

A mop of black curls emerged from the window directly beneath her—the window.

It was the captain!

Zolande, as usual, was gliding about behind her, what should she do?

The black curls revolved—a whitey-brown face turned up, and two black eyes caught sight of her.

That instant Aileen's little finger was pressed to her lip.

A big brown finger was immediately pressed to the lips beneath.

Then the whole arm squeezed through, and the captain pointed to the balcony beneath.

Aileen nodded, and, with a very expressive return-nod, the head withdrew. The pantomime was over.

Aileen carefully shut the window. Her heart was in her mouth, her eyes were dancing with joy; there was a rosy flush over her whole face, which had not been there since last she saw Vara.

Zolande's low-pitched voice broke upon her reverie; Zolande's keen eyes looked her through and through.

"Madame has been exchanging signals with the stranger captain!" sneered she; "madame expects a rescue, does she?"

Aileen gazed at her, horrified. How could she possibly know this?

"Madame forgets she is the wife of Mr. Rochester," continued Zolande, inexorably, "and that no one would be mad enough to assist a wife to escape from her husband."

Aileen's heart began to sink with apprehension.

What if Zolande with her satanic cunning should cause the big captain to believe that she was actually married? Would he then attempt to assist her to escape?

With dismay, she told herself that if he was a man of honour he would not; and if he was not a man of honour it were sin in her to go with him!

Having thus plunged her charge in a sea of trouble, the devoted spy retired to the lower regions for her dinner.

Aileen lost no time in idle fears. She determined to be beforehand if possible with Zolande. If the captain would not help her, as Geoffrey Rochester's wife, he should never know from her of that terrible episode in her life.

If Zolande told him (as she assuredly would), he should be taught beforehand to treat Zolande's communications with the scorn they deserved.

Having thus decided, she resumed her post of observation at the loophole, having first barricaded the door, so that Zolande could not enter without making a noise; and there, sure enough, was the handsome giant, pacing back and forth upon the balcony, with a stout stick to stay his somewhat unsteady steps, and his hat tipped well over his nose.

Very soon he looked up at the sound of a very soft "Sir!" coming from two sweet, trembling lips, and saw the fair little face peering out of the gaol-like aperture, with fearsome tears in the misty blue eyes, and he came to a halt, and reverently gazed up, bareheaded, as men do at far less saintly visages in grand cathedrals.

The distance between them was about twenty feet; the day calm as a summer eve, and the lapping of the waves on the stones away down on the shore served as a pianissimo accompaniment to the following "Catch for two voices."

"So you're Yellow Hair?"

"Yes, sir. When did you read it? Sh—sh! Speak low!"

"This morning. Have been on my beam-ends ever since the 'Hesperides' went down to Davy Jones's locker. I'm your man now—name of Charley Sherrard, Miss Yellow Hair, if you please."

"Sh—sh! Do you hear anybody? Don't look up at me, please."

"How am I to help it, miss?"

"Look at the sea, sir, or at the rail of the balcony. There! Thank you for befriending a defenceless girl. I am kept here against my will—stolen from my home and friends. Do you know Inchvarra, sir?"

"Never heard of it, Miss Yellow Hair. I'll take you back to it, though, if it's on the map."

"Sh—sh! You're looking at me again, sir. Are we very far away from Clonachen?"

"Thunder! 'tother end of Ireland! I say, Miss—have you a brother?"

"Y—yes! Why?"

"I'm that brother then. Mind that. What's my name?"

"Dear me! I scarcely—ah, yes, yes, I do! How clever you are, Captain Sherrard! But I'll re-christen you. Listen! You are Kenelm Guillamore, of Inchvarra Castle, and I am Aileen Guillamore, your youngest sister."

"Then, by Jove, my dear sister, I'm coming up—"

"No—not! You must not let them know you saw me! Don't, for mercy's sake!"

"All right; only when a brother discovers his sister in a hole like this he should want to get to her!"

"Oh, you don't know half the dreadfulness of my position here! I'm imprisoned under false pretences, and that terrible Spanish Moor, Zolande, is my keeper."

"What—the dark woman who can't speak English?"

"Can't speak English?"

"No, confound her! She nursed me a considerable

deal more than I wanted her, while I was at my worst. 'Twas a scalp-cut, you see, and I was always raving about an angel in golden hair—yourself, my dear sister. If she had had her tongue she could have told me who you were, but she knew nothing of what was on my mind."

"You remembered seeing me the day you were carried in?"

"That did I—and the look the window got from your bright eyes too, Miss Yellow-Hair! First moment my sea-legs were under me, which was this blessed day, off I went to the window, and found out more than I had dreamed about! And now, my dear, how'll we give them the slip?"

"Sh-sh! For Heaven's sake, don't speak so loud! Captain Sher—at least, Brother Kenelm, you are altogether mistaken in Zolande. She has only been a spy upon you to find out whether you saw me the day you were carried into my room—"

"By thunder! I am in your room then, my dear? I thought as—"

"Yes, and she knows English as well as I do—"

"Jove! I'd like to hear her, the Jezebel!"

"And she will likely tell you falsehoods about me to prevent you from meddling—"

"Ho, ho, ho! Since she's innocent of English to me how will she manage that?"

"True! I fancy she has outwitted herself this time. When are you going away, sir?"

"Blessed if I know! Before I got my peepers on that bit of a hint I was tired to death of the sleepy place, and mad to get away; but now it's all on 'tother tack. Got any plan made up, sis?"

"No—I can think of nothing. I can only trust to your goodness."

"Ay? Well, listen. I'm going to take yellow fever—"

"Oh, cap—Kenelm!"

"The worst kind. Nobody'll come near me for the infection but yourself, and you won't come for fear like the rest, till you find out I'm your brother. Then you'll be my nurse—"

"Oh, thank you! thank you!"

"And we'll make off in the old man's boat—"

"Yes—yes! How clever you are!"

At this interesting juncture a noise of tumbling furniture at the door pulled Aileen in like a shot.

She flew to the overturned easy-chair, and wheeled it out of the way for the convenience of Zolande, who came in, dinner-tray in hand, her pale olive face quivering with suspicion and suppressed scorn.

She said nothing, however, but placed the viands with her accustomed precision upon the table; and you may be sure the young lady did not reject them this time.

The very next morning Zolande, having gone below for her mistress's breakfast, rushed back again like a whirlwind, locked the door behind her, and began vigorously sprinkling the chamber with one of Mr. Rochester's essence bottles.

"What is the matter?" ejaculated Aileen, really alarmed by the ghastly pallor of the woman.

Zolande flung open both of the windows, and standing in the thorough draught thus created, wiped the perspiration from her forehead.

"Madame," said she, trembling with terror, "the big captain down below is taken with yellow fever!"

"Oh, poor fellow!" returned madame, with divine compassion.

"You will assuredly fall a victim to the same horrible pest, madame," continued Zolande, laying her own hands in the perfume, "if you are madly attempting any intercourse with him."

"Heaven forbid!" cried madame, fervently.

"The ship has brought it from Cuba," shuddered Zolande, "and this awful place is full of fragments of the wreck. We shall all be smitten, I doubt not!"

"Don't mention anything so dreadful, Zolande!" returned madame, with well-simulated horror. "We must do all that we can to avoid infection."

When the hour came for the daily walk upon the balcony Zolande said:

"Madame must not venture out to-day. The windows of the infected room are both open, and the pest is filling the air."

Madame did not like this half so well. She had written a note reporting progress to her new friend, and had hoped for an opportunity to throw it in at his window. But she was forced to submit with apparent willingness.

Then followed two or three days of positive discomfort and no little anxiety to the young schemer.

Such was Zolande's desperate terror of infection that she would not leave her mistress's chamber, nor even allow any of the lighthouse people to approach the door.

She had some provisions brought up, and cooked them herself over a spirit-lamp, and miserably cooked they were, for the conveniences were few, and the woman was panic-stricken.

Then again there was Captain Sherrard waiting,

waiting, day after day, for his presumed sister to come and nurse him according to the plan. If every one kept aloof through fear of infection, why Captain Sherrard would actually perish for want.

Tortured by anxiety, poor Aileen found that week a very long one, and repeated a dozen times of the course of action she and her new friend had fallen upon.

Zolande grew more and more apathetic as the days passed by; at last she even gave up her hurried visits downstairs for the daily supply of provisions, and they were in danger of starvation.

"Zolande," said her mistress, on the morning of the ninth day, after Captain Sherrard had given out the name of his malady, "we have nothing whatever to eat, and I am very hungry. Won't you bring up something to-day? We had only a piece of broiled fish yesterday."

Zolande, crouching on a stool with her hands before her face as if to keep away the light, neither spoke nor moved.

So she had crouched most of the preceding day, to Aileen's no small amusement when she remembered the sham disease of which she was so terrified.

Now her heart gave a startled leap, Zolande was really ill. Her eyes were half-closed, and she seemed unconscious.

Aileen clasped her hands at this unforeseen event, then cautiously removed the key from her attendant's pocket, opened the door, and flew down the winding staircase.

Turning an angle, she came face to face with one of the ill-favoured youths elsewhere mentioned, who had remained behind the rest of the ship's crew in attendance upon their captain.

This individual, beholding such a fairy vision, gaped and stared aghast, but could utter nothing.

"My servant seems ill," exclaimed Aileen, pointing up the staircase. "Please go up and see what is the matter."

The youth obeyed her.

Then Aileen sprang to Captain Sherrard's door, and knocked.

No answer.

She knocked loudly, and cried out:

"Please—please open your door!"

Still no answer.

She wrung her hands. What if he was really ill? Locked in and left to die of hunger?

Suddenly a bright thought flashed across her distress.

"His head is out of the window; he cannot hear me!"

Down she darted another flight of stairs, and on to the balcony.

Sure enough the plague-smitten patient's head was out of the window, and he was apparently perusing the heavens.

"Captain!" exclaimed the glad little voice.

Round came the big face dyed to a hideous yellow.

"Hilloa!" shouted the invalid, delightedly; "so you're not all dead up there! What in thunder kept you so long?"

"Oh, Heavens!" shrieked Aileen.

Zolande's cold hand was on her arm—Zolande, with ashen, convulsed features, eyes swimming in blood and staggering gait.

"Madame," she groaned, "would you ruin me with my master? Return—you seek your death!"

She wiped the foam from her lips with her shaking hand, and gazed wildly in the direction of Captain Sherrard's window.

The young man now appeared, consternation written upon his features.

"She's got the fever!" he cried, "and she'll spread it among us all!"

"Hilloa!" came in a smothered roar from above.

"That's the captain! Gracious! he's out of his bed, raving!" muttered the sailor.

Zolande's almost sightless eyes were fixed in fascinated horror upon the object of her frantic fears—and, in fact, he put the bonâ fide case to shame with his unearthly haggardness.

"Aileen!" shouted the giant, suddenly. "My own sister!"

Instantly she took her cue.

"Why, Kenelm—my long-lost brother!" screamed Aileen, rushing forward.

Zolande stood petrified; the young man gaped.

"Oh, where have you been these ten years, Kenelm?" wailed Aileen, stretching her lily-white hands up the wall, like another Leonora embracing Manrico's prison.

"All round the world," answered the pseudo-brother, truthfully enough.

"And what is the matter with you? You look dreadful!" faltered Aileen, trying not to laugh.

"I've got yellow fever," answered he, dolefully.

"It was raging in Cuba while the 'Hesperides' was there, and I suppose it got in the goods. And the lubbers here are so frightened they won't come near

me—even to Nathan there, the beggar! Just wait till I'm my own man again, you thief!" (this to the dismayed sailor). "They poke the grub in, and shut the door as if I were a beast—and beastly grub it is too!"

"Oh, my poor brother!" sobbed the little minx below—and we fear she meant it somewhat—"you shall not be treated in that brutal manner any longer—thank Heaven, I am here, your rightful guardian, to take care of you! Open the door for me," and she turned as if to enter the balcony door.

"No—no!" gasped Zolande, hoarsely, while she stretched her arms across the doorway, "not while I live! He would blame me—my master. Ah, have pity!" she stopped, and a frightful agony passed over her countenance.

"You are very ill," exclaimed the young girl, struck with consternation at the other's death-like appearance, "let me help you up to our room."

"Don't—touch—me!" panted Zolande, waving her back. "I, too—am plague-smitten!"

"Yes, confound her, and she'll give it to us all!" observed the young man. "And I say the best plan 'ud be to throw her over the railing here."

Round flashed little Aileen, and struck the ruffian such a blow on the mouth that he slunk off abashed.

When she looked again the foreign woman was lying senseless on the stone flags.

"What's going on?" called Captain Sherrard, tired of being a side actor in the play.

"Zolande has the fever, and is lying here insensible," explained Aileen.

"The fever!" echoed he. "By George, that jolly good! Oh, ho, ho, ho! Ha, ha, ha! She's taken it out of fright!"

"Hush, hush! You are much too ill to laugh that way!" adjured the young lady, with a deliciously sly glance at the grinning Caliban, "but if you could be so kind as to pluck up sufficient strength to carry her up to my room—"

"Where's that lubber, Nathan?" objected the lazy fellow, who had small pity for his quondam nurse, "can't he take her in tow? I'm not fond of the plague myself."

"Don't speak to me of Nathan!" cried Aileen, stamping her foot imperiously. "He is a brute, and I have just struck him on the mouth for insulting this poor soul."

"Have ye, indeed?" returned the giant, with a slow fire kindling in his eyes which would have made the absent Nathan tremble in his shoes could he have seen it; "just hold on, little Yellow Hair, until I give the beggar a booting! Come and unlock my door for me—I can't get out of this den unless you do—and I'll take that woman wherever you like."

Then Aileen sped upstairs, and—would you believe it?—in spite of her hurry (and the good little soul was as sorry for Zolande as if she loved her) she found time on the way to retie the coquettish pink silk kerchief at her throat in a fresh bow, and to run her fingers through her short, dancing curls, in case they might be too unbecoming.

Then she turned the big rusty key, and instantly after was pulled in by her new ally, who kicked the door shut with his foot, lest prying eyes should see the absence of fraternal greeting.

"Well, sister Aileen, I'd scarcely have known you!" bawled Captain Sherrard, for the benefit of said prying individuals. "How glad I am to see you here—blessed if I ain't!" he chuckled, in a low voice.

"Dear Brother Kenelm," she began, in like tones, but stopped, half-abashed, half-choked with laughter, and stole the shyest of looks up at the big, handsome fellow.

As for him, he was staring with all his might at what he thought must be an animated doll, and feeling ready to wallow at her feet with admiration; and the longer he looked the bigger his eyes grew with wonder.

"Oh, sir, how kind you have been! how you have saved me from despair!" murmured Aileen, giving him her snow-flake of a hand.

He took it—and seemed unable to relinquish it again.

"Well, by thunder!" he muttered, in a bassoon growl, "that is a hand! What a mite! Like a seashell the size of my thumb-nail! And what a wee little thing you are, you fairy, you!"

"Oh, captain—hush!—your sister, you know!" stammered Aileen, flushing very much; and yet she was not at all angry at the rude fellow's impertinence. "You must not look or speak in that way, or they will never believe us!"

"Then I won't; but how's a chap to help it? Let 'em bother you after this, my dear, and I'll kick them to kingdom come!"

(To be continued.)

FLOWERS AND FERNS.—Nothing beautifies a room more sensibly than a few tastefully arranged flowers

or plants. In summer flowers are always available, and in winter their places may be agreeably supplied by sprigs of evergreens, dried grasses, or immortelles. A few creeping plants or ivy can be obtained at any time during cold weather, and a few twigs of these brought into use whenever required. Those who keep house plants always have the material at hand for table decorations, and they should be used liberally and constantly, varying the arrangement as often and widely as possible. A charming house ornament is supplied by a fern case, which may be constructed quite inexpensively, while the plants required, being indigenous to our woods and meadows, can be easily collected, so that the pleasure of having a case well filled with finely grown plants can be enjoyed by those who do not wish to expend largely for this purpose.

SCIENCE.

PHOSPHORUS BRONZE.—Some of the brands of this alloy bear a considerably greater breaking strain than steel itself. It appears to be suitable for sheathing ships, since when immersed in sea water it loses scarcely more than one-third as much as is lost by the sheet copper.

RAILWAY UP VESUVIUS.—The plans of the line which is to ascend Mount Vesuvius are now complete. The route will be 16.1 miles in length. The gradients are 20 and 35 per hundred, and the road terminates at a few feet from the crater. There will be one station, protected by a sort of break-lava, which will divert the flow, in case of eruption, away from the building and rails. The road is so laid out as to be naturally sheltered at every point, except for a distance of about 60 feet.

The experimental balloon ascent from Woolwich Arsenal took place on Saturday, July 25, under very favourable circumstances. After it had ascended about 1,000 feet the steering apparatus was tried, but failed to have any apparent effect on the course of the balloon; but it developed one quality which was not expected, and which may or may not be of value. It enabled the aeronauts to make the balloon revolve either to the right or the left, according to the way in which they worked it, but in the opinion of the Government officer it failed to fulfil its original object.

A MONSTER GUN.—A monster piece of ordnance is now in course of construction which will, when finished, be greater than twice the size of the largest gun in existence, and its destructive powers at fighting range equally proportionate. With a 16 in. projectile, weighing 1,650 lb. and a maximum charge of 300 lb. of powder, it will pierce the best iron plates, 20 in. thick, at 500 yards, 16 in. plates at 5,300 yards, and will pitch a 16 in. shell into a ship or fortress at a distance of 10,300 yards. The steel block forming the inner tube was the largest ever cast, weighing 12 tons; whilst the trunnion piece, about 18 tons, was the largest forging ever produced at the arsenal. The actual cost of this fearful engine of war will, we learn, not fall far short of £5,500.

An important discovery has been made by a Dutch chemist which, scientifically, he calls "Carbolum," but which he says is nothing less than "The Successor of Steam." It is a form of carbonic acid; and Mr. Beines, the chemist in question, states that it can be used to drive steam engines, and to perform many other of the valuable functions now performed by steam; while it has the advantage of being much more portable, and more quickly available. "If this invention should really turn out practically successful it will effect quite a revolution in England. The chalk cliffs of Kent will become as valuable as the coalfields of Lancashire; our wealth will be enormously increased; and a new source of heat and motion will be supplied at the very time that we were dreading the exhaustion of the old."

NEW PROCESS OF DETERMINING THE ALCOHOL IN WINES.—If to a known volume of water large quantities of alcohol are added, the density and the superficial tension of the mixtures obtained are simultaneously diminished, and consequently there is an increase in the number of drops which they form if allowed to flow slowly from a given aperture. If this aperture has constant dimensions, the number of drops corresponding to each alcoholic mixture is constant also. The difference between the numbers thus found is large enough to furnish a basis for a very sensitive alcoholometric method. The instrument proposed is a pipette holding 0.3 cubic inch. It is filled with the alcoholic liquid under examination, and the number of drops escaping is counted. From this number the proportion of alcohol is calculated by the aid of tables which the author has drawn up. Slight traces of liquids more diffusible than alcohol, such as acetic ether, greatly increase the number of drops.

THE MAGNETIZATION OF STEEL.—If a recently

tempered steel needle be introduced in a magnetizing bobbin connected with a battery of constant current, battery and bobbin comprising the circuit, it acquires a total determined magnetism at the end of a period which appears not to exceed that of its introduction. On slowly withdrawing the needle it is found to retain residual magnetism which, together with the total magnetism, increases with each repeated introduction until a limit is reached. The needle may be magnetized in the bobbin by three other methods: 1. Establishment.—Introduce the needle; establish the current; slowly withdraw the needle. 2. Interruption.—With a closed circuit introduce the needle slowly; break the current and withdraw the needle. 3. Instantaneous charge.—Introduce the needle; establish and break the current; withdraw the needle. Repetitions of any of these three processes (all things being equal) insure an augmentation of the needle's magnetic power.

EPSOM SALTS AND SULPHUROUS ACID IN DYING.—It has been long remarked that woollen goods dyed with aniline colours, and treated with Epsom salts, will stand the action of soap and soda, and the dressing process generally, better than when not so treated, or than when treated with any other substance. Dr. Reimann advises the use of Epsom salt on yarns to be dyed violet. By the action of soda the magnesium salt is decomposed, with separation of insoluble magnesium compounds, which exert no action upon the colouring matter; any alteration in colour by the alkali is thus prevented. All woollen dyes are agreed that, in dyeing with methyl and dahlia-violet, the use of sulphurous acid is very advantageous. The colours thus obtained are of a brighter, clearer tint. It may be that a partial reduction of the methyl-rosaniline to leucaniline having taken place, oxidation then effects the transformation of the latter into the former.

DECIPHERING BURNED DOCUMENTS.—M. Rathelot, an officer of the Paris law courts, has succeeded in an ingenious manner in transcribing a number of the registers which were burnt during the Commune. These registers had remained so long in the fire that each of them seemed to have become a homogeneous block, more like a slab of charcoal than anything else, and when an attempt was made to detach a leaf it fell away into powder. Many scientific men had examined these unpromising black blocks, when M. Rathelot hit upon the following method of operation:—In the first place he cut off the back of the book so as to leave nothing but the mass of leaves which the fire had caused to adhere to each other; he then steeped the book in water, and afterwards exposed it, all wet as it was, to the heat at the mouth of a calorifère; the water, as it evaporated, raised the leaves one by one, and they could be separated, but with extraordinary precautions. Each sheet was then deciphered and transcribed, and the copy certified by a legal officer. In this way the records of nearly 70,000 official acts have been saved. The appearance of the pages was very curious; the writing appeared of a dull black, while the paper was of a lustrous black, something like velvet decorations on a black satin ground, so that the entries were not difficult to read.

THE SCZAROOK.—The Russians have lately adopted a new shell which, according to recent experiments, seems to be a formidable projectile. It is well known that with the ordinary elongated bolt a ricochet fire cannot be maintained; and as this species of firing is very effective against masses of troops, the loss is a matter of considerable moment. The sczarook, for such is the name of the new projectile, is either a percussion or time shell and a shot, the latter of which ricochets beyond the point of explosion of the bursting charge. The shell portion is a simple iron cylinder, to one end of which is secured, by a thin sheet of lead, a spherical shot. On leaving the gun the combined projectile acts like an ordinary elongated shell; but as soon as the explosion of the charge takes place, the cylinder of course flies in pieces, while the shot impelled, by the additional velocity and by reason of its form, ricochets for hundreds of feet ahead. In firing at batteries, the double effect of this projectile comes into excellent use, as the shell might be exploded among the guns, while the ball would strike far in the rear among the reserve troops; or while the shell might burst in the front rank of an advancing column, the ball would continue ploughing its way through several succeeding ranks.

MUSIC BY TELEGRAPH.—Mr. Elisha Gray, a gentleman well known as an inventor and manufacturer of telegraphic apparatus, has perfected an instrument by which sounds produced at one end of a wire can be conveyed to the other end by electricity, over circuits of great length. It has already been tested over a circuit of 2,400 miles, with the most satisfactory result. Tunes played upon the keyboard of the transmitting portion of the apparatus were distinctly audible and unmistakably reproduced, note

for note, at the distant end of this long circuit. The apparatus has been named by Mr. Gray the telephone. The transmitting apparatus consists of a keyboard having a number of electro-magnets corresponding with the number of keys on the board, to which are attached vibrating tongues or reeds, tuned to a musical scale. Any one of these tongues can be separately set in motion by depressing the key corresponding to it. To this transmitting instrument the conducting wire is attached, the other end being attached to the receiving apparatus, which may be anything that is sonorous so long as it is in some degree a conductor of electricity. A violin, with a thin strip of metal stretched between the strings at a point where the bridge of the instrument is ordinarily placed, will, on receiving the sound transmitted through the conducting wire from the piano, give out a tone very similar in quality to that of an ordinary violin.

SIRIUS.

At a recent astronomical meeting, a paper on Sirius, by Mr. J. M. Wilson, was read. His observations tended to confirm the speculations of spectroscopists that Sirius is intrinsically much brighter than the sun, and must, therefore, be of a higher temperature. His measures of the position of the companion of Sirius showed that it is now passing away from its periastron, and that the time of a complete orbital revolution is probably nearly two hundred years. Taking the parallax of Sirius as 22 sec., the distance of the companion from the principal star is about fifty times the earth's distance from the sun. This would give the mass of Sirius as only 3.1 times the mass of the sun, while the amount of its light is estimated at more than two hundred times the light of the sun. He therefore concluded that, area for area, Sirius must be much more intensely luminous than the sun. He wished to direct attention to the companion of Sirius, and to point out that it is within the reach of instruments of only moderate aperture. The telescope with which his observations have been made is a refractor of 8½ inches. He has ordinarily used a power of 400.

Mr. Mattieu Williams said that it seemed to be assumed that increased brightness was necessarily an indication of increase of temperature; but that though this might be true for solids, it did not follow that it was true for gaseous bodies. When one gas flame was placed behind another the brightness was doubled, but the temperature remained the same.

Mr. Ranyard said that the speculations of spectroscopists as to the heat of Sirius were founded on the blueness of its light rather than on its general brightness.

Mr. W. P. FRITH, R.A., writes that he has just seen Hogarth's picture, the "Gate of Calais," which has been carefully restored, and is as perfect as when it left the painter's easel. He implores the authorities at the National Gallery not to let slip the opportunity—rare in the extreme—of acquiring one of Hogarth's finest works, when they can have it for the price for which it was knocked down at Christie's, Messrs. Agnew being willing to forego any profit.

A curious innovation in high-life marriages in Paris is to be noticed—that of only inviting young, and, above all, single persons to the luncheon; the grave and heavy relatives being invited at a monster dinner. It is also a compliment of a delicate nature for the bridegroom to present the bride with a prayer-book printed in as many languages as she speaks, the vignettes also to be as expressive as an additional tongue. Since January the practice is becoming more general for French newly-married couples to travel during the honeymoon.

His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh will take possession of that beautiful Kentish property, Eastwell, early in September next, some months earlier than the actual terms of engagement would have allowed. The duchess will probably be visited about the same time by her mother, the Empress of Russia, who is understood to feel acutely her first long separation from her daughter, and whose coming is expected to be associated with circumstances of an interesting domestic nature. Their Royal Highnesses have determined to make this delightful spot in the "Garden of England" their home for at least some years to come.

ALMOST immediately the new road about to be made through the Green Park, in order to relieve the traffic from Piccadilly to the West End, will be begun. The new thoroughfare will lead out of Piccadilly at a point opposite Hamilton Place, and cut through the Park. Constitution Hill is not touched, but, on the contrary, remains intact, by the intended construction of an arch, under which heavy vehicles going eastward will pass, private carriages going by Grosvenor Place. The new road

is to be 60ft. wide and 700ft. long, and will presumably be a macadamized thoroughfare. When the road through the Green Park is finished, the block which invariably occurs in the season opposite the park will be obviated.

EAVESDROPPING.

Mrs. HUNTINGDON was frankly confidential one morning to her aunt and chaperone, Miss Lucy Brebante, who was spending the summer months with her niece at a fashionable boarding-house at Scarborough.

Mrs. Huntingdon was a widow, reputed rich, most undeniably handsome, carrying thirty-six years under the mask of twenty-five, and a belle in her circle of society.

Seldom was the handsome widow moved to "open her mind" in frank speech. But Aunt Lucy, looking up from her book, as she opened the door on the morning referred to, knew from the stormy eye and the clouded brow that, as she mentally expressed it, "Clara was put out about" something.

"To think," Mrs. Huntingdon began abruptly, and without prelude, "that Hugh Walbridge was actually waiting here for Miss Lucy Lyman!"

"The young lady who came last week?"

"For a vacation! A vacation! A school-mistress and barely pretty. I could strangle her!"

"Why, my dear, Mr. Walbridge never proposed to you, did he?"

"Never proposed to me! I intended he should. Are you aware, Aunt Lucy, that my only escape from starvation at present is matrimony?"

"There is Mr. Leconte; he is devoted, surely."

"Mr. Leconte! Yes, he is my alternative. But—but Hugh Walbridge is not only wealthy, but young, handsome and of good family, while Mr. Leconte is about seventy, ill-tempered, marked with small-pox and made his money in—well, no matter."

"Very melancholy," said Aunt Lucy, in a tone of mild satire.

"I was so sure of Hugh Walbridge," pouted the widow; "he was as devoted as I could desire, and I thought he was my slave for life. Just imagine my sensations when I overheard him telling that little piece of milk-and-water pretences how stupid it was here until she came. They are not engaged yet; I have found out so much, and, if I can prevent it, they never shall be."

"But, Clara, why need you be in such a hurry? Wait until next winter."

"Perhaps you are not aware of the state of my finances, Aunt Lucy. When my dear departed left this world, I had exactly ten thousand, I spent a year in close retirement. Then I resolved to marry money. Not such transient wealth as Mr. Huntingdon's, but solid riches. I have been for two years waiting my opportunity, dressing expensively, living at the best boarding-houses, and I have three thousand pounds between me and beggary. You know what my girlhood was, a pilgrimage from one boarding-school to another! I cannot work, have never in my life, so if Mr. Hugh Walbridge does not propose to me, I shall marry Mr. Leconte, who has proposed already. There is little doubt the first offer for a Mrs. Walbridge will be made to that baby-faced girl, and she must refuse it."

"Scarcely probable, my dear!"

"I will make it certain. I have made good use of my time since she came here, and cultivated her acquaintance. She is as transparent as a piece of glass, and I can read her character like an open book. Shy, modest and gentle, and yet with an under-current of pride. That is what I will work upon, and, in good time; there goes the little lady to the summer-house, with her sewing. I will follow!"

Catching up a piece of worsted work, the handsome widow sauntered down the broad staircase, and across the garden to the summer-house, where already Lucy Lyman had chosen a shady seat, and was hemming a piece of fine ruffling.

A dainty little lady was the young school-mistress, with nut-brown hair, in close short curls over her shapely head, and soft violet eyes, shaded by long golden lashes. Pretty, in a quiet refined type of beauty, though far from possessing the superb face or figure of Clara Huntingdon.

Her quiet dress of dotted muslin was as strong a contrast to the widow's splendid toilet as was her beauty to that of her rival.

But Clara Huntingdon's manner was cordial and gracious as she begged to share the shady seat, and chatted of the weather, the scenery, and finally, the people around them. Gradually, Lucy suspecting nothing, she led the conversation to Hugh Walbridge, praising his talents, his handsome face, his courtly manner, till she said:

"It is a pity his conceit spoils it all."

"I never thought Mr. Walbridge conceited," said Lucy, blushing a little.

"Well, perhaps that is not the word, but he thinks his wealth is irresistible. He and I are old friends, and he tells me of the ease with which the fact of his wealth captivates the hearts of all the unmarried women he meets."

"That shot told," the widow thought, seeing the delicate head raised over so little, and the colour deepen in the fair cheek.

"You see," she went on, with a charming imitation of perfect frankness, "he looks upon me as an old married woman, and so treats me with a candour that is sorely flattering at my age. He has been engaged countless times, just to prove how ready the girls all are to share his wealth; and he breaks hearts as remorselessly as if they were created for his amusement. But I am getting ill-natured. I do not often indulge in gossip. How hot it is! I believe I will take a nap before luncheon. Do you ever indulge in such shocking laziness? No! Well, you will excuse me, dear, will you not?"

And she sauntered away as leisurely as she had come, not seeing a tall figure leaning against the rear corner of the summer-house, the figure of a man who had come up from the woods behind the summer-house in time to hear most of the conversation inside. He looked after the tall figure of the handsome widow, with a sarcastic smile.

"So that is your ladyship's little game, is it?" he muttered. "Lucy refuses me, and you catch my wounded heart on the rebound! A neat little plot! Now for a counter-plot. Next time, Mrs. Huntingdon, guard against eavesdroppers."

He waited for some time, hidden by the vines trained over the summer-house, while Lucy, her sewing resting idly upon her lap, mused sadly.

She was very young, an orphan, and niece of the lady keeping the boarding-house. Anything like deceit was something new in her life, which had not been an unhappy one, though she had earned her own living for nearly three years. Of a perfectly trustful disposition, she had accepted the marked attentions of Mr. Walbridge, one of her aunt's boarders, in the city boarding-house that lady conducted during the winter months, with happy confidence in his sincerity. When they had parted in June—he, to keep with her aunt in the summer boarding-house; she, to finish her term at school before taking holiday—she had believed his assurances of the price of parting, and accepted as trustfully his seeming gladness of welcome when she came.

Was what she had heard true? Did the man she believed all sincerity and honour only play with hearts, in the haughty vanity of his wealth and position?

It was very hard to believe all his tender looks, his loving words were false; but the girl's cheek burned as she thought how easily she had been won, trusting him, and frankly showing the pleasure his love gave her. But he should not number her in his rejected conquests.

While she so resolved, Hugh Walbridge came to the door of the summer-house, and stood looking at her. His face was so very sad, his brow so clouded, that the girl forgot her resolution, forgot what she had heard, in the sudden certainty that he was in trouble and had come to her for sympathy.

He came in slowly, and took a seat opposite Lucy at the round table, sighing heavily.

"I have come to say good-bye," he said, and his heart bounded to see how pale she grew.

"Good-bye! You are going away?" she said, trying vainly to make her voice steady.

"I am going to California. It may be years before I return."

"But is it not dreadfully—I mean very sudden?" she asked, with white, quivering lips.

"Very. I—I may as well be frank with you, Miss Lucy. I have had letters this morning that tell me the bank in which my father invested my patrimony before his death has failed, and the depositors will lose everything. But I have an uncle in San Francisco who will give me a start in some business."

"I am sorry—I—"

And pride gave way before love, leaving Lucy sobbing bitterly.

"Don't!" cried Hugh Walbridge. "You tempt me beyond my strength. I meant simply to bid you good-bye, for I will not ask you to share the fortunes of a ruined man. I love you too well to offer you poverty as my wife. I—I must go. I cannot bear to see you weep."

Lucy looked up. Through the mist of her tears she could see Hugh's large eyes looking tenderly into her own, his lips working convulsively, as if keeping back the words of love springing there. And seeing him so, she only remembered that she loved him, that he said he loved her.

"Since you will not ask me," she said, with a nervous laugh, "I must come without. I will not let you go from me so, Hugh."

Never was acrobat quicker in motion than Hugh

Walbridge was in gaining the other side of that little round table, and possessing himself of Lucy's white hands, that trembled in his, but did not try to escape.

"You love me! You will not fear my poverty, Lucy?"

"Why should I fear poverty? I have never had riches," she answered, bravely. "But, Hugh, I will tell you a secret. I do not tell everybody, because it is nobody's business, but I will tell you."

"Well, I am listening," he answered, glad to throw off the mask of gloom, and let his face reveal his happiness.

"Next autumn, when I am twenty-one, I shall have two thousand pounds."

"Lucy! To think you are such an heiress. But why do you submit then to the drudgery of school-teaching?"

"I taught at school before I knew about the money. My uncle left it to me last winter, but I am not to have any until I am twenty-one, and I had to keep my engagement at the school until the term closed."

"So you will have a little fortune of your own."

"But, Hugh, will it not be enough for you to start in some business here, and not go to San Francisco?"

Hugh Walbridge made no answer. The quick generosity, the confiding frankness of this gentle woman he loved made him already ashamed of the deceit by which he had won the confession of her love. He wondered if she would forgive him, or if the sensitive pride nestling in her heart would resent the fraud. She would know soon that he had acted falsely, better dare the truth at once.

"Lucy," he said, tenderly, "I must go to San Francisco, but you will go with me, will you not? Some investments I have made there demand my personal attention, and my uncle writes me to come as soon as possible, or I may lose heavily."

"But I thought your father put all your money in a bank that had failed," Lucy said, looking puzzled.

"So he did, but I drew it out years ago."

"But I don't understand," she said, piteously.

"Why are you deceiving me?"

Then he told her of what he had overheard, pleading his own cause eloquently, and begging her to believe all she had heard of his base bragging was false. The little head was drawn very erect as he told his love again; but it drooped till it rested upon his breast, as his earnest words carried conviction of his sincerity to the heart he had won.

"Do not refuse me now," he pleaded, "but promise me to take a wedding-tour to California by the next steamer!"

"Must you go away so soon?" she faltered, all her pride swept away by the fear of a speedy separation. Her lips quivered, and her eyes grew misty, though she struggled to repress these signs of her agitation. Hugh was quick to seize his opportunity. Taking her little, cold, trembling hands in his own firm, tender ones, he bent over her with his eyes full of pleading, loving and protecting at once.

"I must go!" he said. "You will not send me away alone, Lucy?"

"I can't!" she answered, half laughing, half crying. "I don't want to lose you now, since you have cheated my confession from me; but, Hugh, I can't help it. So if you will take me, I will go."

When the luncheon-bell rang, Mrs. Huntingdon happened (?) to be looking from her window, in the direction of the summer-house, and saw Hugh and Lucy as they came slowly up the garden walk in answer to the summons. The widow's large dark eyes were very keen, and the widow was not waiting in penetration, so, after watching the young couple till they passed out of sight into the house, the widow whispered, sharply:

"She has accepted him after all."

Five minutes later, a little note lay upon Mrs. Huntingdon's desk, directed "Mr. Henry Leconte," and containing her acceptance of that gentleman's proposal of marriage.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Walbridge sailed for California in the next steamer, but to this day Mrs. Leconte is ignorant of the manner in which her neat little plot was baffled by accidental eavesdropping.

A. S.

GIRL AND WIFE.—Who has not seen with half wonder the sudden development of a young couple when once they have become father and mother? A few days ago—yesterday it seems—and they were almost children. The young wife was a girl, with all the joyous carelessness and heedless buoyancy of a child; her older friends—at least those who had not thought enough—shook their heads dubiously, and told one another that she was "fit for anything but to be married;" "she would be better at home with her mother, or even at her school." But the wife becomes a mother, and a marvellous transfor-

mation takes place. There may be the same vivacity of spirit, but all is calmer, deeper, stronger. She has entered a new world, and is endowed with new powers. A wise providence has taken the place of thoughtlessness, a firm self-reliance that of helpless dependence, an untiring energy that of dreamy inactivity. The girl has suddenly become a woman, challenging your respect with your admiration.

FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS.

THERE has been a great deal of talk about "fair-weather friends," and certainly no friend is so true as one who offers aid and comfort when the storms of life beat upon the heart. Yet, after all, since life is not all tears, a friend who can rejoice with one is very precious, and I have come to the opinion that he is the one most rarely found.

People are so seldom genuinely glad when one is glad. Tell them some misfortune that has fallen upon you, and they will really regret it; but let them know of some good fortune, and they are merely formally polite. A certain spice of envy seems to dwell in almost every mind, so that the man who would sympathize with a neighbour whose house has been burned down without insurance does not feel glad that he has bought a new one; and the girl who would be indignant if her friend had been jilted receives the news of her happy marriage with no interest whatever, and perhaps even wonders "what any one could see in her."

No one would have another to starve, but the very people who would fly to your succour were you in dire necessity, and really could shed tears over you in your distress, by no means clap their hands with joy if fortune favours you suddenly with a certainty of comfort for all the days of your life.

In fact, whether health or wealth or love or fame is yours, you will find, to your astonishment, that those who have professed most liking for you care very little; and you will in time understand that in this world one needs a few "fair-weather friends," who will smile when one smiles, and rejoice to see earth's good things lavishly bestowed upon one; and that it is much easier for most people to be comfortably sympathetic when trouble has fallen upon their friend than to be genuinely so when he is happy.

M. K. D.

JUDGING BY FACES.

A MAN's character is stamped upon his face by the time that he is thirty. I had rather put my trust in any human being's countenance than in his words. The lips may lie, the face cannot. To be sure, a man may smile and smile and be a villain; but what a smile it is—a false widening of the mouth and creasing of the cheeks, an unpleasant grimace that makes the observer shudder. "Rascal" is legibly written all over it.

Among the powers that are given us for our good is that of reading the true characters of those we meet by the expression of the features. And yet most people neglect it, or doubt the existence of the talisman which would save them from dangerous friendships or miserable marriages, and, fearing to trust a test so intangible and mysterious, act in defiance of their impulses and suffer in consequence.

There are few who could not point out an actual idiot, if they meet him, and many know a confirmed drunkard at sight. It is as easy to know a bad man also. The miser wears his meanness in his eyes, in his pinched features, in his complexion. The brutal man shows his brutality to his low forehead, prominent chin and bull neck. The crafty man, all envious and elegance, cannot put his watchful eyes and snaky smile out of sight as he does his purpose. The thief looks nothing else under heaven, and those who lead unholy lives have so positive an impress of guilt upon their features that it is a marvel that the most ignorant and innocent are ever imposed upon by them.

Perhaps it is the fear that conscientious people have of being influenced by beauty, or want of it, which leads so many to neglect the cultivation of the power which may be brought to such perfection; but a face may be beautiful and bad, and positively plain and yet good. I scarcely think any one would mistake in this way, and I aver that when a man past the earliest youth looks good and pure and true, it is safe to believe that he is so, and safe to trust him; and that when the countenance is evil the heart is probably evil also.

J. S.

CAUTION TO BATHERS.—Avoid bathing within two hours after a meal, or when exhausted by fatigue or from any other cause. Avoid bathing when the body is cooling after perspiration; but bathe when it is warm, provided no time is lost in getting into the water. Avoid chilling the body by sitting or standing naked on the banks or in boats, after having been in the water. Avoid remaining too long in the water, but leave it immediately upon the slightest feeling of

chilliness. Avoid bathing altogether in the open air if, after having been a short time in the water, there is a sense of chilliness with numbness of the hands and feet. The vigorous and strong may bathe early in the morning on an empty stomach; but the young and those who are weak had better bathe three hours after a meal; the best time for such is from two to three hours after breakfast. Those who are subject to attacks of giddiness and faintness, and those who suffer from palpitation or other sense of discomfort at the heart, should not bathe without first consulting a medical adviser.

MADELINE'S PLOT.

CHAPTER I.

OUR story opens on a cold April morning, verging towards noon, in a handsome house. The postman has just left a letter.

Let us follow the footman up the richly carpeted stairs. He enters a boudoir; he has a silver salver in his hand, and upon it lies the letter just left. He steps softly, silently, to the side of a great, deep easy-chair, and, bending slightly, extends the silver salver; the letter is taken by a small jewelled hand, and he bows and withdraws.

We are alone with the owner of that delicate hand. While she reads we will take an inventory of the room, beginning at the window, which is a delightful "bay," shaded by long hangings of crimson satin and white velvet paper in alternating stripes. Chairs, lounges and footstools are of crimson satin, with white marble mantel, tables and stands. In one corner of the room is an elegant rosewood piano, in another a guitar, with a group in costly marble of "The First Cradle." The carpet is a perfect imitation of shaded woodland mosses, sprinkled here and there with brilliant scarlet berries; the whole finished by elegant mantel ornaments of parian marble, gilded mirrors, fine pictures, and, in fact, every costly trifle which a long purse and a free hand were apt to display.

We will now return to the owner of the hand. She has just risen, with a sigh and a look of perplexity. She stands in meditation for a minute, then, as if she had decided something of importance to her own satisfaction, sweeps across the room to a small writing-desk, lays down the letter, and begins an answer.

She is very lovely—dark, as we judged by the colours of her room, a little above the medium height, with a full, rounded form, a magnificent mass of blue-black hair worn as a coronet, large, clear and liquid brown almost amber eyes, complexion opaque white, with the slightest tinge of cream. At this minute a faint pink flickers in and out like the reflection of the dying sun upon a bank of snow.

Her toilet consists of a white cashmere morning dress, faced and trimmed with crimson satin, fastened at the waist with heavy white silk cord and tassels, at the throat by a pin of elaborately wrought dead gold; ear-rings and bracelets of the same finish her costume.

We are privileged intruders, so we follow to see what troubles her so. We will read the letter.

"MY DEAR MADELINE,—Are you dead? It is so long since I have seen or heard from you that I am in despair. I shall be in town next week. Aunt Ruth wants a waiting-maid, and has requested me to find her one. She has so much trouble in getting and then keeping one, as she lives so far from town. What shall I do? I never did such a thing in my life; I do not know how to start about it; will you help me when I come? I must end my note now, as Robert is waiting to post this. Write at your earliest convenience. Good-bye until we meet."

"Yours in haste, GERTUDE."

The answer ran as follows:

"MY DEAR GERTY,—You ask me if I am dead; I wish I were. I suppose you think now I am mad; I feared I should be until I got your letter; now I begin to hope. You need not come to town for a maid; your aunt can have Phoebe; she has to leave—my tyrant wills it—she is to be replaced by a French tool of his selecting. Dear Gerty, I am a prisoner in my own father's house. I am not confined by bolts and bars. I can come and go at my pleasure, seemingly; but my every step is watched. I can only have my freedom by becoming Reginald Vernor's wife, and I would far sooner die. I cannot believe my kind, loving father ever made such an outrageous will. When my poor father first became acquainted with Reginald he seemed to love and admire him exceedingly; but towards the last of his life I noticed he would shudder at his approach, and, no matter how happy he had been, or how sunny his smile, his face would darken and his form tremble at the sound of his voice, or the echo of his step. You may, then, imagine how I felt when the will was read which made me heir to poor papa's wealth only if I married Reginald Vernor. If I refused, it was to go unconditionally to Reginald.

"I have refused, but it makes no difference; he swears I shall be his wife. One by one our old domestics are dismissed, and replaced by others of his choosing. I fear he will make me his wife in spite of all I can do. I do not understand his influence; when in his presence I have scarcely any will of my own, and you know how self-willed I can be. Oh, Gerty, I fear him!"

"I went to our lawyer and talked to him; he says he made a will for father a month before he died, and that he left me sole heir; it cannot be found; I have searched high and low. I have seen the new will; it is certainly either father's handwriting or a very clever forgery. I would willingly give up all right and title to everything to be free from that man. Oh, Gerty, how I hate and fear him!"

"I must close my letter. I may be watched or disturbed at any minute. I shall have to get Phoebe to smuggle this to you, and write another for the mail bag; so do not be astonished if you receive two letters; my correspondence always undergoes inspection."

"Your miserable friend, MADELINE."

She hastily directed and sealed this letter, and deposited it in her bosom. Then she commenced her second letter. She had just finished the last word, and was signing her name, when the door slowly opened, and a man entered the room. She raised her eyes to the mirror opposite and saw him; as he quietly entered and stole up behind her, she involuntarily shuddered. A look of rage passed over the man's face, but quickly disappeared as she turned and confronted him.

He was a man well worth looking at; tall, dark and imposing, hair and eyes of midnight blackness, skin swarthy as an Italian, manners gentlemanly and elegant; but if you gazed at him closely, there was a peculiar gleam or glitter in his eyes which seemed to hold you in spite of all the will you might bring to bear against it.

Madeline felt it now; it was only by great determination that she succeeded in withdrawing her gaze.

At last he spoke.

"My dear Madeline, I heard you were writing some time ago; may I inquire who is to be the happy recipient of a letter from you?"

She answered by tossing the note across the table; he had seated himself opposite to her.

"Nay, I do not care to read it. I merely asked out of a natural curiosity."

She laughed scornfully.

Well she knew no line of hers ever departed un-read by him from that house.

"Oh! to your dear friend Gerty. Quite a short note. Why, it is two hours, at least, since I heard you were writing."

"How proud you must be to think you have such faithful servants!" she scornfully answered. "I did commence two hours ago; but I have been thinking, and I have only just finished my letter."

"Indeed! And pray what have been the thoughts which have kept you busy so long?"

"Are you the master of my thoughts as well as of my actions?" she indignantly asked. "But I do not mind telling you: I was thinking what a kind friend you were, how happy you made me; how you were repaying my poor father for all his kindness to you by your loving, faithful care of his daughter; how my steps are watched, my friends denied, my faithful servants dismissed. My very thoughts are not my own; even my letters are opened and read, not only this time but always. I was thinking what a happy home I have—how superior you are to all other men. And I was thinking more: how I hated, yes, detested you."

A grayness like unto death spread over the man's face; his hands were clenched until the nails penetrated the white skin; he bit his lips until the large white teeth almost broke the thin crimson covering.

"Madeline, beware!" he hissed between his clenched teeth. "I have suffered much at your hands—do not tempt me too far! I love you, and you know it; you impose upon that love. I offer you a home and wealth. Am I to blame that your father gave me his hoards, made me his heir? By making you my wife I give it all back to you."

"Yes, but with your hated self. You are very generous!"

"Oh, Madeline, my darling!" he cried, flinging himself at her feet. "Do not be so cruel! I love you—I love you! Be my wife! I do not ask you to love me now, I do not expect it. I will be so good, so kind that you will learn to love me in time. The minute you call me husband Vernor passes back into your keeping. I will give it to you for your very own."

"You cannot give what is not yours to give."

He sprang to his feet, a look of rage, of fear, succeeded the one of love which he had bent upon the lovely girl the moment before.

"What do you mean?" he cried, panting.



[LOVE AND HATE.]

"I mean that Vernor never was, is not and never shall be, yours. I mean that the will that says so is a base forgery! I mean I never will, as my father's legal heir, by becoming your wife, make the property legally yours. I mean that I hate you—I loathe you—and I would not marry you to save you from death!"

He grasped her hand in a vice-like grip.

"Girl, are you mad? Do you defy me? Are you not afraid I may kill you?"

"No," she laughed, defiantly, "you do not dare to kill me; you would gain nothing and lose all—I do not fear death."

"There are fates worse than death. I say again do not tempt me too far—I am but mortal. I have pleaded in vain. To-morrow you become my wife—I have the power to make you, if I do but exert it. I wanted you to love me."

"I swear I will not become your wife! I will appeal to the minister. What is to prevent me?"

"I will tell you what is to prevent. I have a drug, which I shall see is administered, which will take away all opposition, which will leave you in so calm and peaceful a mood that you will know no will but mine. Mine you shall be! There is no escape. Good-bye for the present, my beautiful wife!"

Before she realized what he was doing he caught her in his arms, and imprinted upon her a passionate, burning kiss; then, seating her in her chair again, he bowed mockingly and sauntered from the room.

Madeline took her handkerchief from her pocket and wiped her face as if he had polluted it; a flush of rage mantled her fair cheek, her eyes blazed, her form trembled with fear and anger.

"How dare he? I will show him whether I have a will of my own or not! Become his wife? I would strangle myself with my hair first, if I had no other means! I will escape him yet—ay, this very night too. Ah, Phoebe, my poor girl, I am so glad you are come. Come here—I have a proposition to make you. You know you are to leave this evening because you are too faithful to me. You know my unhappy position. Would you help me escape my hated fate if you could?"

"Oh, miss," the girl replied, taking her hand and kissing it, "you know I would almost give my life for you!"

"I do not want your life, Phoebe—only your help. We are the same height, about the same size—your eyes and mine almost the same shade. Now what I want is this: Take this money and go and buy me a curling wig as nearly like your hair as you possibly can. Do not let any one see it, as you value my life. Pack your trunk; slip in a few of my

dress; hire a vehicle to be here after dusk. See your trunk placed upon it. Dress yourself, and be sure to wear a veil. Bid the servants good-bye, and then come for my parting gift and good-bye. Here," taking the letter from her bosom, "post this as you go. Now pray be careful; you shall be well repaid."

The girl, with a courtesy, withdrew.

Madeline walked backwards and forwards like a caged lioness. That one kiss had roused all the passionately proud temper of the girl. He could not have offered her a greater insult.

"His wife!" she scornfully thought. "Oh, Heaven forbid! rather, a thousand times, death! If I should fall! I will not—no food nor drink shall pass my lips while I stay here. Your fearful drug shall be harmless for me, this time, at least."

For hours she paced her room, battling with her thoughts; then she sank into her chair wearily. She started suddenly as the door slowly opened. It was Phoebe returned. She closed the door, and hastily looked it; her hands were empty.

"You have failed?" gasped Madeline.

"No, miss," said the girl, slipping off her shawl. "I tied it under my dress, and lucky I did. I met Mr. Vernor face to face on the steps."

Here she dextrously unfastened the parcel from her skirts, and, opening the paper, displayed a blonde wig as like her own hair as possible.

"I got it large, for I remembered how much hair of your own you had."

Madeline tried it on; it fitted to a charm.

"Now I must do something to my eyebrows, or they will betray me. Let me see yours; rather dark for such light hair, and your lashes still darker. I think I can manage it. I have a fearful headache, Phoebe. I shall not come down to tea."

"Shall I bring you some up, miss?"

"No, Phoebe, I shall eat no more in this house—my headache is all a sham to escape Reginald's detested company. Do not forget your part, dear girl. Go now—it is almost dark; in another hour the vehicle will be here. Remember the veil."

The girl departed. Madeline looked the door after her; then she collected all her jewellery and money, with the exception of some for immediate expenses, and sewed them in a strong cloth, then sewed on two strings and tied the treasure around her waist.

She had scarcely finished when a little tap came at the door, and Phoebe's voice asked admission. She opened the door, immediately closing and locking it after her entrance.

The girl was dressed as for a journey, but began to take off her clothes in a great hurry, Madeline donning them as fast as she discarded them. In

five minutes the exchange was completed, the gas was lowered, and Phoebe, with her veil down and her handkerchief to her eyes, left the room and the house, sobbing as she went. The driver handed her in, and asked the direction. She whispered it between her sobs, and the vehicle departed.

"Another gone!" said Reginald, exultingly, as he watched from the parlour window. "The new one comes to-morrow. Ah, my beauty, I shall have it all my own way soon!" with which consoling thought he returned to his book and cigar by the parlour fire.

We will return to Madeline's chamber, which joined by folding doors her boudoir. She stood in the middle of the floor, intently gazing at a diamond ring which blazed and sparkled upon her finger—the only ring on her hand; how was that? Why, it was not Madeline's at all; Madeline's clothing, Madeline's ring, but not Madeline.

"I declare!" said Phoebe. "How a diamond ring does become my hand! But I would not have Mr. Reginald catch me here for all the diamond rings in the kingdom! I am glad I kept one suit of my own clothes, though I must say these are very becoming. All my nice starched aprons and caps, all my nice new dresses are gone. Well, no matter; I have that in my wallet which will buy more and better, thanks to my dear young lady's generosity. I wonder if I look as pretty in my own clothes as she did? I will change this dress for my own, and it will go hard if I do not get out of this house before morning. There, I feel better," she cried, after the change had been completed. "Now for my hat and shawl. I will lock the door on the outside, and the prisoners will not be missed till morning. Bang! there goes the front door—out with the light—now I'll peep. Mr. Reginald, by all that's lucky! I don't fear any one else. So now for the back door."

She locked the bedroom door, flew down the kitchen stairs, and out of the back door, into the street, and soon was lost in the crowd.

But as she passed the kitchen she could not resist the temptation of looking in. The cook sat opposite the door; she caught a glimpse of her face as she flitted past, thought it was her ghost, and screamed and gasped and screamed again. She was fearfully superstitious, and had she not seen Phoebe depart an hour ago?

Reginald had only gone out to smoke his cigar and get a breath of fresh air before retiring. At hearing the uproar in the kitchen he hastily returned.

"What is the meaning of this disgraceful noise?"

"If you please, sir, cook declares she just saw

Phoebe's ghost pass the kitchen door. I heard the door shut myself."

Reginald stood still for a minute, then darted upstairs and tried both of Madeline's doors; they were locked. He stooped to the keyhole; the key of the bedroom was gone, the rooms both dark. Should he run the risk of disturbing her? She had said her head ached; he could not bear the suspense till morning, so he gently whispered:

"Madeline!"

No answer.

"Madeline!"—louder—"Madeline!" he shouted.

No answer.

Then he shook and pounded the door.

Still no answer.

Then he took duplicate keys from his pocket, opened the door, and strode to the bed. It was empty. He dashed into the boudoir. Nothing but the empty room rewarded him.

Poor Madeline! None too soon was your fitting. "Confusion! I have lost her, but not for long!"

CHAPTER II.

THE scene now changes to a delightful country residence twenty-five miles from London. The house, large and commodious, built of stone, has a very elegant and substantial look. It stands in the midst of a large park, the front and sides surrounded by elegantly laid-out gardens, from which the frost is just breaking, and the faintest suspicion of green is beginning to appear. A large greenhouse holds a conspicuous position, summerhouses are dotted here and there; fountains there are, but tied up by winter's relentless hand.

His grasp, however, is slowly but surely relaxing. The grape vines are still in their winter coats of straw. At the back of the stables and barns, hayricks and henhouses hold unbounded sway. For miles around lay fields which in the summer will be fields of golden grain, emerald grass, oats, rye, barley, corn and fruits of every description. In their respective places are cattle and poultry enough to gladden the heart of any man.

Jules Ashcroft is considered the richest and most successful farmer in—we will call it Ashland. His son George has just finished his collegiate education, and is now at home for a rest before commencing his career as a lawyer.

George is a fine, manly specimen of a gentleman, tall, rather large, nobly planned, with a mass of auburn hair, beard and moustache, large and rather dreamy blue eyes, dreamy when at rest, but like the blue forked lightning when aroused by anger or injustice.

The father is a blunt, good-natured, well-educated man, fat and florid.

Mrs. Ashcroft is a gentle, sweet-faced, dark-haired and eyed lady; she has one daughter married and living in London.

The lady's-maid has just arrived. We will follow her to Mrs. Ashcroft's room.

"So you are my new maid. Are you used to the situation? Have you ever lived out before?"

"No, ma'am," stammers a sweet voice. "Yes, ma'am—that is—I don't know, but I think I can suit."

"But I understood you to say you had lived with Miss Vernor."

"Yes, ma'am, I have, for a short time."

"Did you suit her?"

"Yes, ma'am," she answered, smiling. "I am pretty sure I suited her very well indeed."

"Your name is Phoebe, is it not?"

"I am called so," she answered, evasively.

"Can you read and sew?"

"I can do both," she answered, rather impatiently.

"I suppose you are tired; you can go to your room. I will ring when it is time to dress for dinner."

Phoebe, or Madeline, departed gladly to her room. Mary, the chambermaid, who conducted her thither, would willingly have stopped to chat; but Madeline was tired, and by her coldness and shortness soon sent her to the lower regions, complaining about "stuck-up people who were no better than other people."

"But she's handsome! Oh, the pretty curly hair and the fair white hands! A princess could not hold herself higher."

"Perhaps she may hold herself too high; Mrs. Ashcroft won't stand any of her airs."

When the bell rang Madeline hastily answered the summons. She liked the lady's looks; she knew it would be hard to be at anybody's beck and call, she who had been waited on hand and foot ever since she was born; but better anything honest than Reginald's wife. She had a faint hope that somewhere in the future she should have her own again.

When she entered Mrs. Ashcroft's room George was reading to his mother. His voice ceased as she entered and he rose to depart.

"Don't go, George. This is my new maid. I am all dressed but my hair. I know you must be tired,

and would feel rather strange, so I dressed myself, all but my hair. If you will do that as nicely as you can, I shall see how you will suit. Then to her son: "She has been living with Miss Vernor. You remember Madeline, George? She spent the summer with Gerty three years ago."

"Yes, I remember. She was a little beauty."

Madeline blushed to the tips of her fingers; she went on braiding her mistress's hair, although she felt his eyes were noting every look, every motion, and she felt so nervous she could hardly stand.

At last she finished; the trying ordeal was over; she could change her position, and escape those searching eyes. The bell sounded—she was alone. She stepped to the glass and examined herself closely.

"Can he suspect? I suppose I might throw myself on their protection if the worst came to the worst, but I prefer to be independent. How perfectly handsome he is! How he has improved in three years! So he thought I used to be a little beauty. I wonder what he would think now?"

She blushed again at her own thoughts.

Two months passed; it was the middle of June. Madeline had grown accustomed to her duties, which were light; had grown into the good graces of every one in the house by her quite, lady-like ways, and, not the least, by her beauty. She was greatly admired by all the family; her cares were few, her troubles light. Only one thing annoyed her excessively; that was the attention paid to her by Alberto, the valet. He was her constant shadow, when it was possible, and when he could not follow her steps, he would make his eyes do double duty.

But she managed to escape his importunities very well until one day when she had an errand to do for her mistress at the neighbouring village. She had performed her task, and was returning leisurely homeward, looking along the borders of the woods for violets, when, as she raised her foot to cross the stile, a hand was extended to help her over. She looked up and met Alberto's bold black eyes fixed upon her in ardent admiration. She was going to step back, when he grasped her hand in a vice-like grip, and lifted her over in spite of her resistance. She looked at him in anger.

"How dare you?" she cried, while the hot blood rushed to her face.

He laughed derisively.

"How dare I? Hear the queen! I dare do more; do you know, my pretty one, that I dare to love you—have loved you ever since I caught the first glimpses of your pretty brown eyes?"

"Let me pass. I am in a great hurry."

"Yes, I know; you always are when I want to speak to you; you are not so much afraid of Mr. George—ah! you blush. Haven't I seen you watch him an hour at a time when you thought no one was watching you? But there was. I am always watching. What do you think he cares for you? He only wants to make a fool of you, while I love you and will make you my wife. Will you have me?" he asked, looking into her pale, proud face.

"No!" she answered; "and if you do not stand out of the path I will scream for help."

"Do, my dear."

She endeavoured to pass him, when he caught her in his arms.

A piercing shriek rang from her lips. At the same moment a stinging blow fell on Alberto's hand from a gentleman's riding-whip, and George Ashcroft's voice cried:

"Unhand the girl, and go about your work."

He cast a look of rage at George and Madeline as he departed, which neither saw.

Madeline had made one more enemy, and a treacherous one too.

"Oh, air, I am so glad you were near! I am very much afraid of that man."

"He shall not trouble you any more. What was he saying?"

"He was asking me to marry him, and when I refused he caught me in his arms."

"Poor fellow! I can hardly blame him. Why did you refuse him? He is handsome and well educated; you might do worse."

"I marry a servant?" cried Madeline, indignantly, forgetting herself.

George looked at her in astonishment, and well he might, for, as Alberto had called her, she looked a queen.

"Pardon me. Come, I am going home, and will see you safely there. By the way, did any one ever tell you how much your eyes resembled Miss Vernor's?"

Madeline started and turned pale; he was not looking at her, so she answered, as lightly as she could:

"Yes, sir; Miss Vernor herself noticed the resemblance."

"Did she teach you to read? You are the finest reader I have heard for a long time; mother is delighted. You look astonished; I was in mother's dressing-room yesterday when you were reading Tennyson to her."

"Oh!" cried Madeline, laughing and blushing. "I am glad I did not know it, or I should have stuttered and stammered awfully. No, Miss Vernor did not teach me. I have had a very good education; it is only since my poor father died that I have been dependent on my own exertions for a livelihood. We are at home, I thank you for your escort;" and she bowed gaily, and ran into the house.

George stood looking after her until she was out of sight, then, with a sigh, he turned and sauntered on.

What feeling was it that made him sigh? What was the interest which he felt springing up in his heart for this fair-haired girl? Where had he seen her before?

Ever since that summer, three years ago, a black-haired, brown-eyed beauty had been shined in his heart and thoughts; he had longed to question Phoebe about her, but had resisted manfully; he did not think it would be strictly honourable.

But now Phoebe herself came in for a good share of his thoughts; he could not account for the singular attraction which she held for him.

When in her presence his eyes followed all her movements, which were grace itself. When out of her presence his thoughts would revert persistently to her, her sayings, her doings; and, do what he might, he could not banish her brown eyes from his remembrance.

Madeline was standing at the window of the library, one day in July, watching some birds feeding, when she experienced a peculiar and never-to-be-forgotten sensation. She shuddered, paled, and raised her eyes, and there, coming up the path, was Reginald Vernor. Her eyes were drawn to his; she would have flown, but he had seen her—had evidently been watching her for some time.

"Good day, Phoebe," he called, pleasantly.

Madeline recovered on the instant, she had forgotten her disguise. Was it possible to deceive those eyes? she thought.

"Good morning, sir," she answered, gayly, imitating as near as possible Phoebe's voice. "If I may be so bold—what brings you here?"

"I wish a little conversation with you," he said, leaning his elbow on the window-sill.

"Will you not walk in, sir?"

"No, I am in a great hurry; and I want to see you privately."

"How did you know where I was?"

"Your successor, Madame Oswald, found this letter" (showing Gerty's), "so I concluded you had accepted the situation, and I thought you might possibly know where Miss Vernor had gone. I have a great many questions to ask you, and no time to spare now to ask them in. Can you meet me this evening somewhere—at the foot of yonder lane, or at the garden gate—about eight o'clock? I have very important business which will detain me until then. Will you come?"

All the time he had been speaking his eyes were fixed upon Madeline with a peculiar, glittering expression. She felt as a bird must when charmed by a serpent. She could not answer.

"Will you meet me to-night, at eight, at the foot of the lane?"

"Yes," she answered, still under the fire of those eyes.

"Mind, don't disappoint me."

With this parting injunction he departed.

Madeline, released from his gaze, sank, almost fainting, into a chair; as she raised her eyes with a wordless prayer for help they encountered those of George Ashcroft at the farther door. His eyes looked troubled, and a decided frown marred the beauty of his face.

Madeline rose, blushing and trembling.

"Who was that man, Phoebe?"

"Mr. Vernor, sir."

"Your old master?"

"My mistress's so-called guardian."

"What did he want? What is he to you?"

"What is he to me? A nightmare—an incubus."

Then, noting his look of astonishment, she calmed herself, and answered:

"Miss Vernor has gone on a little excursion, and did not think proper to inform him what route she should take. He thought perhaps I might be able to give him her address."

"You know it?"

"I do."

George went up to the girl and took her hand; her eyes drooped, and a thrill passed over her.

"Phoebe, my poor girl, beware of that man; he looks dangerous. You are very pretty; do not have anything to say to him if you can possibly help it."

She withdrew her hand coldly, and answered, haughtily:

"Thank you, sir. I am fully able to take care of myself. I thank you for your good advice, but it is needless."

She left him standing there the picture of perplexity. What had he said or done to bring up that haughty look? How she blushed and trembled when she first felt his touch! What could it mean? If George Ashcroft had been a vain man he would have known what it meant. Alberto could have enlightened him.

Madeline was in great trouble. What should she do? Did Vernon suspect her? If she met him she ran great danger; if she did not, still greater; for if he did not suspect her now, he would then by her refusing to meet him.

"It is useless to rebel. I must go—he wills it—but only this once. I will fly or reveal myself to the Ashcrofts. I would tell them all now, only something seems to urge me to go. It is now a quarter past eight. I will throw on Mary's waterproof, and pull the hood over my head, to escape the prying eyes of Alberto, who is always on the watch."

(To be continued.)

The south wing of Kensington Palace, formerly occupied by the late Duke of Sussex, and afterwards by the duke's widow, the late Duchess of Inverness, is undergoing repairs and alterations as the future residence of Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise (Marchioness of Lorne) and the Marquis of Lorne. In all probability the princess's domestic establishment will occupy the new residence before Christmas.

A RATHER startling statement was made in the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in reference to the Post Office Telegraph Department. The money spent in the purchase of the telegraph lines amounted, up to the end of last year, to the sum of 9,465,187; and the net revenue, after paying working expenses, was only 95,957—or about 1 per cent. And there are many liabilities which may perhaps have to be met, so that the country has made a bad investment of its money.

A REMARKABLE HAILSTORM.—A hailstorm of extraordinary nature recently took place in the northern portion of New Jersey. The hailstones, it is stated, in some instances, measured as much as five inches in circumference, and resembled common rock candy, being of oval form bristling with cubical crystals. The ice was very hard and difficult to break, but when broken presented the appearance of the section of an onion, in its concentric rings. The damage done to buildings and crops was excessive, windows being smashed by scores, roofs torn, and fruit trees completely denuded.

We were told by a celebrated naval officer the following anecdote:—On one of his cruises the sailors saw a comet and were somewhat surprised and alarmed at its appearance. The hands met and appointed a committee to wait upon the commander and ask his opinion of it. They approached him and said:—"We want to ask your opinion, your honour." "Well, my boys, what is it about?" "We want to inquire about that thing up there." "Now, before I answer you, let me know what you think of it?" "Well, your honour, we have talked it all over and we think it is a star sprung a leak."

EFFECTS OF HEAT.—The influence of the excessive heat does not seem to have confined itself alone to suffering humanity, but has also been severely felt by the elephantine species. In the Jardin des Plantes an elephant, rendered frantic by the rays of the sun, attacked his mahout, and had not assistance been immediately rendered the unfortunate man would have been trampled to death. In the Jardin d'Acclimation one of the small elephants trained to carry children ran away, but was fortunately captured and mastered before any very serious damage had been done, although a great many people were in the grounds. According to the "Journal de Marseille," some fishing-boats cruising off the coast recently fell in with three large sharks in hot pursuit of a shoal of tunny-fish. One of the boats was very nearly upset, owing to its having come into collision with one of these monsters of the deep. Some anxiety is felt at the bathing-places along the coast, as a few years ago the Catalan baths were visited by sharks, driving away all the visitors.

TELEGRAPHIC CROWS.—At a recent session of the Asiatic Society Mr. L. Schwendler showed a crow's nest, made of pieces of telegraph wire, twisted together in a most ingenious and knowing manner. He said that lately such nests had been frequently found and that the crows often selected telegraph posts, between which and the telegraph wires they built those wire nests, causing what are known as "earth" and "contact," and interfering with communication. Crows, however, are by no means the only animals interfering, by their domestic arrangements, with overland telegraphy. Wasps build their mud nests in the porcelain insulators, causing, in rain and wet, leakage from the wire to the ground. Birds of prey frequently dropped dead fish and other offal upon

the wires, causing contact. These were all frequent sources of temporary interference with telegraphic communication upon overland lines, and they, combined with many other facts not necessary to mention, seemed to show that it would be a very great advantage to use submarine telegraphs instead of overland lines.

WATERLOO OFFICERS.

THE following list enumerates the Waterloo officers who have survived to witness its fifty-ninth anniversary:—One field-marshal, nine generals, five lieutenant-generals, three major-generals, five colonels, seven lieutenant-colonels, five majors, seven captains, twelve lieutenants, two paymasters, one quarter-master, one surgeon-major, two surgeons, and two assistant-surgeons, making a total of sixty-two. Of these, two colonels, five lieutenant-colonels, and four majors have retired from the army at different times by the sale of their commissions. Of those who actually remain in the service and those on half-pay, seven are still but captains and twelve lieutenants.

Field-Marshal Sir William Gomm is at this moment in his eighty-first year of service. Field-Marshal Gomm and General Sir George Bowles were at the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807, and Field-Marshal Gomm, General Sir William Rowan, and Captain Payne shared in the glories of Sir John Moore's victory at Corunna in 1809. The three appear to be very old comrades, for they were together in the Walcheren expedition, the two former at Flushing. Lieutenant-General Smith, previous to entering the army, served for a brief period in the Royal Navy, where he received three wounds. General Sir Thomas Reed was wounded at Ferozeshah, and is the only one of the sixty-two who helped to quell the Indian mutiny. General Lord Roebury is the only surviving Waterloo officer who fought side by side with his own foes in the Crimea, and witnessed the fall of Sebastopol; and Sir William Gomm is the only survivor of Rolia (1808). Lieutenant-Colonel Drought and Paymaster Hilliard were at Albuera; Sir William Gomm and Sir Charles Yorke were present at Vimiera, and Sir George Bowles at Talavera.

Three were at Busaco, four at Fuentes d'Onor, five at Ciudad Rodrigo, seven took part in the desperate and sanguinary struggles at Badajoz, eleven assisted at Salamanca, while no less than twelve participated in the crowning victory at Vittoria. Four were at the passage of the Bidassoa, fourteen at Nivelle, eleven at Nive, eleven at Orthes, and thirteen at Toulouse. Fourteen were present at Quatre Bras, and five—General J. A. Butler, Major-Generals Lloyd and Trevor, Captain White, and Lieutenant Cox—were at the capture of Paris (1815).

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

THE secret of enjoying lies in continually remembering its brevity. We should not quarrel with our friend if we thought he might die before night. The wife would never utter the rebuke against the strictly masculine habit of dropping the newly read paper on the floor if she thought that before many days the husband's careless hands would be folded over his pulseless breast. There would be no impatience over the noise of children's feet upon the stairs if the tired mother knew that in one short week's time those little feet would be lying for ever stilled, with the earth above them.

The trifles of to-day will be the relics of to-morrow. The little worn baby's shoe, for which no one cares to-day—what a treasure it will be! The old, cheap penholder the lover used at his desk is more precious when he has laid it down for ever than gold. The tiny kid glove, with its missing button and its shabby finger-tips, which yesterday would have furnished the fastidious husband with a text for a dissertation on neatness in dress, now brings the hot tears to his eyes, as he presses it to his quivering lips, and remembers that the hand that wore it will never need glove again. Perhaps it seems as if it were something higher and greater than tact that teaches people to bear with each other's failings, to make everybody happy, and to live their daily lives in such a way that there shall remain no bitter memories. Well, be it so.

POINTS OF CATS.—A few words in regard to the points of a cat, for this animal has points as well as a horse or a dog. Of all colours, we infinitely prefer the tortoiseshell, with white feet and breast. Cats of this colour are always docile, affectionate, tidy, and good mousers. They are always long-lived. Gray cats are quickest tempered. Black cats are slowest. Maltese cats are not so cleanly in their habits as those of other species. Large ears denote sagacity. A long tail is a sign of a hunter. Yellow

eyes with very small sights are not so desirable as grayish eyes, half-covered by the black pupils.

THE German Emperor has issued a strange edict to his officers, enjoining their implicit obedience to a code of honour which he has drawn up for the regulation of duelling. He draws a line between duels in which German officers are to be compelled or permitted to fight & outrance and others in which they are to be drawn off after their honour (!) has been avenged by flesh wounds. And yet the sovereign who draws up this code of military honour does so in open defiance of the civil law, which prohibits duelling. The emperor authorizes—may, insists that his officers shall fight duels, which the law strictly inhibits.

FACETIÆ.

A THIEF running away is a scamp, but the policeman's chase after him is a scamper.

THE tea-kettle is said to be the only singer which never gets a cold.

HAVE the courage to face a difficulty, lest it kick you harder than you bargained for. Difficulties like thieves, often disappear at a glance.

A PIQUA girl who had a quarrel with a lover remarked to a friend that "she wasn't on squeezing terms with that fraud any more."

IF every word men utter fell to the ground and grew up a blade of grass, most public speeches would be worth ten times as much as they now are.

"WHAT bonnets have you, for old ladies?" asked a country dame of a London milliner. "We have none now, was the reply; "all London ladies are under forty."

LACONIC.

Inquisitive Party: "Boy, what are you fishing for?"

Boy (without turning his head): "Fish!"

NO CHOICE.

Julia: "Going for a governess! Why, I'd rather marry a widower with six children."

Kitty: "So would I, but where's your widower?"

CORDIAL FOR AN INVALID.

Bevy of Beauties: "And, oh, Mrs. Twitters, we like your husband so much! You ought to have seen how he carried on with us last night!"

ALARMING ACCIDENT.—One of the jockeys at Goodwood, being of an impulsive temperament, after riding a race sat down on the spur of the moment. His feelings may be better imagined than described.—Punch.

MRS. MALAPROP says she can't think what people mean by asking for more "adult schools" for the working classes. As if there wasn't adulteration enough already among the tradespeople without putting the working men up to it.

SEASIDE SERVANTS.

"Now, mind, Sarah, we must be called at six o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Very well, mam, you will have to call me at five, that's all."

ONE of "our young girls," at an examination in grammar, the other day, when asked why the noun "bachelor" was singular, blushing answered: "Because it is very singular they don't get married." She went up to the head.

IMMENSE RAPIDITY.

"Father, is the transit of Venus a rapid transit?"

"Well—ah—yes, I believe it is."

"Then we shall see it in London, shall we?"

"No, my son."

"LET that pudding alone, there, that's the desert!" exclaimed a waiter to a countryman, who was devouring the tapicots at an early stage of the dinner. "I don't care if it is desert," testily said the countryman; "I'd eat it if it was a wilderness."

MRS. SHARP got a divorce with alimony from two husbands successively. She is now seeking a divorce from a third, when she will be rich and independent. N.B.—This requires genius in the art of teasing.

A DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR OF OUR SCHOOLS.

School Superintendent: "This, brethren, is my best boy, who brings home all his wages to his mother. Now, Muggins, why do you bring home all your wages to your mother? Speak up!"

Muggins: "Cause she'd lick me if I didn't."

GETTING HIS ANSWER.

Important Old Gent from the country, who thinks the lofty bearing of these London barmaids ought to be "taken down a bit": "Glass of ale, young woman; and look sharp, please!"

Haughty Blonde (blandly): "Second-class refreshments lower down, sir!"—Punch.

THE LADY ADVOCATE.—"Miss Lavinia Goodell, of Janesville, Wisconsin, has been admitted to the bar."

—Echo. The information is too brief. We could wish it had been fuller. Thousands, in these days of Woman's Rights, would like to have known whether

Miss Goodell styles herself a barrister or a barmaid.—*Punch*.

REASONABLE EXCUSE.

(Scene at a watering place.)

Mrs. De Bege: "Oh, thank you, I should like to go, but I really haven't time. (We only stay two days, and to show all my dresses I must dress every two hours, and I take forty minutes each hour.)"

A PARDONABLE TRICK.

Mrs. Brown's Aunt (with luggage): "Can you tell me where Simon Brown lives?"

Brown (incognito): "Oh, you're the nurse come to tend them for the small-pox!"

[And that is the reason Mrs. Brown's aunt's visit was never paid.]—*Punch*.

A DISCREET HINT.

Matilda (star-gazing): "How I wish I could catch a falling star!"

Young Dobbs (whose picture has been so successful at the Academy this year): "That's impossible, Miss Matilda. But—might I suggest that you needn't go far for a rising one?"—*Punch*.

A REFINEMENT.

'Arry: "What d'yer say, Bill, to some grub? I feel jolly peckish down here at Margit."

Bill: "Margit! It ain't Margit; it's Margate!"

'Arry (who possibly may have been taken to task before): "Well, all right, old fellow, I know; I suppose I didn't hapsprate the H!"—*Fun*.

A REFLECTION.

Julia: "Yes, dear, you know you were on the fort for at least three hours, spooning with Charlie Smithson; but I can see a false, deceitful flirt in your face!"

Bella: "Indeed, love! I never knew before that my face was a looking-glass."—*Fun*.

A JOE'S COMFORTER.

Maud: "Oh, Uncle George, I can see at least three gray hairs on your head!"

Uncle George (with sentiment): "Ah, my dear, all my hair will be gray soon!"

Ethel: "Never mind, dear Uncle George! There's so very little of it that it won't much matter!"—*Punch*.

THE CORRECT TIP.

Swell: "Ah, I desay you're not a G. T.; eh, boatman?"

Boatman: "Eh, sir?"

Swell: "A Good Templar, I mean."

Boatman: "That I am, sir—when I can't get nothink to drink."

Swell: "And when you can?"

Boatman: "I'm still a G. T., sir. (With a sly wink.) Good Tippler then, sir."

TOAST.

The Army—May they never be so rude as to turn their backs upon their enemies.

The Navy—May it never be at sea in the performance of its duty.

May the hair of friendship never be cut by the scissors of adversity.

May the face of good-fellowship never be washed by the waters of oblivion.

A CERTAIN deacon, who was a zealous advocate for the cause of temperance, employed a carpenter to make some alterations in his parlour. In repairing a corner near the fireplace it was found necessary to remove the wainscot; when lo! a "mare's nest" was brought to light, which astonished the workman most marvellously. A brace of decanters, sundry bottles—all containing "something to take"—a jug and tumblers, were cosily reposing there in snug quarters. The joiner, with wonder-stricken countenance, ran to the proprietor with the intelligence—"Well, I declare," exclaimed the deacon, "that is curious, sure enough. It must be that old Captain B. left those things there when he occupied the premises thirty years since." "Perhaps he did," returned the discoverer; "but, deacon, that ice in the pitcher must have been well frozen to have remained solid."

LENDING AND BORROWING.

"My dear," said Mrs. Green to her husband, one morning, "the meal which we borrowed from Mr. Black, a few days ago, is about out—and we must bake to-morrow."

"Well," said her husband, "send and borrow a half-bushel at Mr. White's; he sent to mill yesterday."

"And when it comes shall we return the peck we borrowed more than a month ago from the Widow Grey?"

"No," said the husband, gruffly, "she can send for it when she wants it. Sam, do you go down to Mr. Brown's and ask him to lend me his axe to chop some wood this forenoon; ours is dull, and I saw him grind his last night. And, Jim, do you go down to Mr. Clark's, and ask him to lend me a hammer; and, do you hear? you might as well borrow a few nails while you are about it."

A little boy enters and says: "Father sent me

to ask you if you had got done with his hoe, which you borrowed a week ago last Wednesday; he wants to use it."

"Wants his hoe, child? What can he want with it? I have not done with it; but if he wants it, I suppose he must have. Tell him to send it back, though, as soon as he can spare it."

They sat down to breakfast.

"Oh, mercy!" exclaims Mrs. Green, "there is not a particle of butter in the house. Si, run over to Mrs. Notable's—she always has excellent butter in her dairy."

After a few minutes Si returns.

"Mrs. Notable says she sent you the butter, but begs you to remember that she has already lent seventy-nine platefuls which are scored on the dairy door."

"Seventy-nine platefuls," exclaimed the astonished Mrs. Green, holding up both hands. "It is no such thing. I never had half that quantity; and if I had, what is a little plateful? I should never think of keeping account of such a trifling affair. I declare I have a mind never to borrow anything of that mean creature again as long as I live."

CAN A WOMAN KEEP A SECRET?

CAN a woman keep a secret?

Ask you this with tone sincere?

Keep it ever: Lower whisper,

Lest your little maid may hear.

In her hour of bitter waking,

Past her red lips' rosy bars

Went there cry to mortal hearing

Voice to aught beneath the stars?

Did that pallid, patient mother,

Meeting you at morning tide,

Tell you of her weary vigil,

Hope and love both crucified?

Look where evening revels echo

Round the haughty, lovely queen,

While fair blossoms rain their petals

Over hair and rippled sleeve.

Ask her why her velvet bracelet

Seems a trifle out of place,

Will she tell you, how in anger,

Fingers strong have left their trace?

When a slave from thraldom fleeing

Sought a woman's tender aid,

Was the fugitive who trusted

Ever stricken or betrayed?

Ah! through all the jester's charges,

Still abides a better trust

In the safety of the secrets

Woman keeps, if keep she must.

E. L.

GEMS.

WERE it not for clouds that darken us there would be no rainbow in our lives.

THE first steps are all-important. Give any direction to the infant mind, and it will keep on almost of itself. It requires much fire to make water boil, but when it is thoroughly heated, a lamp will keep it from cooling.

WE all complain of the shortness of time, and yet we have much more than we know what to do with. Our lives are either spent in doing nothing at all, or in not doing what we ought to do. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as if there would be no end to them.

IT is not great calamities that embitter existence; it is the petty vexations, the small jealousies, the disappointments, the minor miseries, that make the heart heavy, and the temper sour. Do not let them. Anger is a pure waste of vitality; it is always foolish and always disgraceful, except in some very rare cases, when it is kindled by seeing wrong done to another; but even that noble rage seldom mends the matter.

THE man who considers that the home duties of a woman are inferior to the political work of man must be either a bachelor or blind. The very highest qualities of the heart and intellect may be exercised by a mother, a sister, or an elder daughter, in watching over the physical, mental and moral growth of the children in her care. Heroic patience, a vigilance that never tires, an adaptation of means to the end, a careful study of individual traits, a keen psychological insight, may all find ample room for exercise within the four walls of even a humble home.

A LAWYER.—It is related of George Clark, the celebrated negro minstrel, that, being examined as a witness, he was severely interrogated by the attorney, who wished to break down his evidence. "You are in the negro minstrel business, I believe?" inquired the lawyer. "Yes, sir," was the prompt

reply. "Isn't that rather a low calling?" demanded the lawyer. "I don't know but what it is, sir," replied the minstrel, "but it is so much better than my father's, that I am rather proud of it." "What was your father's calling?" "He was a lawyer," replied Clark, in a tone of regret that put the audience in a roar. The lawyer let him alone.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

MEDICAL VALUE OF ASPARAGUS AND CELERY.—A medical correspondent says that the advantages of asparagus are not sufficiently appreciated by those who suffer with rheumatism and gout. Slight cases of rheumatism are cured in a few days by feeding on this delicious esculent; and more chronic cases are much relieved, especially if the patient avoids all acids, whether in food or beverage. The Jerusalem artichoke has also a similar effect in relieving rheumatism. The heads may be eaten in the usual way; but tea made from the leaves of the stalk, and drank three or four times a day, is a certain remedy, though not equally agreeable. It may be well to remark that most plants which grow naturally near the sea coast contain more or less iodine, and in all rheumatic complaints iodine has long been a favourite remedy. Iodine is dangerous, however, in overdoes, affecting especially the eyes. The same effect may be produced by eating abundantly of asparagus or celery, which are well known seaside plants.

STATISTICS.

MARRIAGES.—According to the latest census of the population of England and Wales, out of nearly 23 million, about 13½ millions are single, the number of unmarried males and females being almost equal; but of these 8 millions, or more than two-thirds, are under 15; if the period is extended to 20 years, another two millions are added, leaving the number unmarried above 20 years of age at only 3 millions and a half, or scarcely one-seventh of the whole population. The remainder of the population have been married, and are either husbands and wives or widowers and widows. At the taking of the census there were 3,883,363 husbands and 3,948,527 wives; the difference between the figures being caused by the absence from the country of 65,000 of the husbands. Of the husbands, 5,951 were under 20 years of age (including also those under 15); 219,197 between 20 and 25; 502,846 between 25 and 30; 559,537 between 30 and 35; 524,427 between 35 and 40; 492,120 between 40 and 45; 426,872 between 45 and 50. The numbers then gradually decrease, until between 80 and 85 there are only 14,392. In the next five years the number is 8,318, but between 90 and 95 there are 509, in the next period 86, and above a hundred five are returned. The ages of the wives form a striking contrast. In the first period, between 15 and 20, there are 34,573, nearly six times the number of husbands at that period of age; in the next period, 20 to 25, there are about 140,000 more wives than husbands, after which the figures approach each other gradually, the last period at which the wives are in excess of the husbands, being 25 to 40, where they are 12,000 above. In the next period the results are different, and the husbands of 40 to 45 are 7,000 in excess of the wives. The proportion increases with age, and from 80 and upwards the number of husbands are double that of the wives.

MISCELLANEOUS.

MR. NONLE's statue of Cromwell will be ready to be placed upon its pedestal in Manchester, early next month.

THE largest brown trout ever known, weighing 20lbs., was last week forwarded to London, from Newbury, by the Earl of Craven.

OUR readers will not have forgotten the late visit of the Czar to London. The on dit is that the "little bill" for his entertainment at the Guildhall comes to 11,000l.

AN Irish militiaman being told by a phrenologist that he had the organ of locality very large, innocently replied, "Very likely; I was five years in the 'local militia.'"

THERE is to be an International Geographical Congress held in Paris in the spring of 1875. A committee is now at work, arranging details and classifying the various subjects to be considered.

WHEN the Sunderland and Carlisle Railway was formed, the Duke of Sutherland had already expended 281,000l. in the construction of northern railways. He held 105,000l. of the Highland Company's stock, the line from Bonar Bridge to Golspie has cost him 116,000l., and that from Golspie to Helmsdale 60,000l. He now subscribes 60,000l. more, raising his total interest to 341,000l.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
THE GIPSY FEE; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUM- STANCES ... 383	CAUTION TO BATHERS ... 403
SILVERSTONE'S HEIR; OR, THE MYSTERY OF BLACKROCK TOWER ... 389	FACTICE ... 406
EXPECTATIONS ... 392	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... 407
QUALITIES MOST ES- TIMABLE IN THE HOSE ... 394	GEMS ... 407
DR. FAIRBANKS, THE DISCOVERER OF OXYGEN ... 396	MISCELLANEOUS ... 407
THE SWEET SISTERS OF INCIVARIA; OR, THE VAMPIRE OF THE GUILLANORES, com- menced in ... 397	SILVERSTONE'S HEIR; OR, THE MYSTERY OF BLACKROCK TOWER, continued in ... 398
SCIENCE ... 401	EXPECTATIONS, com- menced in ... 398
SAVEDROPPING ... 402	THE GIPSY FEE; OR, A SLAVE OF CIRCUM- STANCES, commenced in ... 398
JUDGING BY FACES ... 403	
MADLINE'S PLOT ... 403	

"The North and West." Song, written by D. Morley, composed by Henry Morley, R.A.M. (Hutchings and Roper, 9, Conduit Street, Regent Street, W.) Composed to the tune of "The North and West." The song is dedicated to the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JOSEPH S.—The question is too personal to receive attention.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—Letters have been received from the following:—Charlie M. and J. E. C.

W. G. (Scarborough).—You should apply to a patent agent.

R. S.—We do not admire the verses called "The British Queen." We will attend to the other matter anon.

A. R. (Leeds).—We do not give recipes for depilatories, believing them to be injurious when used by amateurs.

EMMA.—It is contrary to our rule to communicate with correspondents otherwise than through these columns.

KATRINA.—The ballad about the Curfew reads prettily enough and is interesting as showing the peril a woman will encounter to save a man whom she loves.

USA.—The legend about the cat to which you refer is of no practical utility. The colour of the hair is a dusky-brown. The handwriting is cramped and bad.

ENGINEER.—Your letter puzzles us somewhat. It is difficult to understand how, in the ordinary acceptance of the terms, an individual can be a working man and a bookworm at the same time.

WILL D.—Both your ailments may probably be alleviated if you take every morning ten drops of the concentrated solution of chloride of soda in a wineglassful of pure water.

HOUSEWIFE.—So much depends upon individual partiality that you may possibly take exception to our selection. We think, however, we may safely recommend Samson's Sauce, as we have heard it generally well spoken of.

JOHN E.—Your words "the lines are my own," if taken literally, are not necessarily conclusive upon the question mooted by us in our former answer. However, no doubt the subject will be reconsidered in due course. At present we refrain from expressing an opinion.

SARAH D. L.—You would probably be cured of your ailment if you attend regularly as an out-patient the hospital nearest your residence. The subject referred to at the close of your letter is only a superstition; it requires no thought or attention whatever.

BERNICE.—It is quite possible for a person suffering from rheumatic gout to obtain considerable aid and relief from good medical advice. Marked changes for the better are often observed in persons thus afflicted who submit to the proper regimen. We observed one specimen of handwriting only and that is very good.

WILLIAM T.—A moment's reflection should have satisfied you that there were no steam cranes in the early days of the world's history. The more simple contrivance of a windlass or something similar was probably the means then used for hoisting the large blocks of stone into their places in the various buildings or pyramids. Of course a greater proportionate amount of manual labour was employed then than now.

LYDIA H.—Lydia has no particular meaning attached to it in the list of Christian names. It is just the name of a place, like Alma. Eliza, as we have often said before, is derived from the Hebrew and means a worshipper of God. Charles means valiant, Albert means bright. If men were as good as their names those that are called Herbert should be illustrious rulers and all Josephs prosperous. James is the last name on your list. Do you know a James? If so take care. Our book says the name means "beguiling." But what's in a name?

ELIZA T.—1. The books state that the present Emperor of Russia married in 1841 the Princess of Hesse, by whom he has had a large family, but we do not find any detailed account of those of their Imperial Highnesses who are now living. We presume they were all present at the marriage of the Duchess of Edinburgh, but in the particulars of that wedding we find no distinct list of the children of the Czar. 2. Children born out of wedlock are not usually introduced into what is termed society until they have acquired reputation and a name. 3. You write tolerably, in every sense of the word.

H. V.—If you wish to trade in the open, that is, away from a shop, you must apply for a licence either to the chief officer of the police or to the exciseman of the district in which you reside; to the former, if you intend to

carry on your occupation on foot; to the latter, if you propose to use a horse or other beast bearing or drawing a burden. This licence would not be required if you sell the article in question in a shop. As to Sunday trading, you would in either case be subject to the police regulations of the precise spot in which you trade, and these vary considerably.

JANE (Norwood).—Catoptromancy is a hard word, as you say, and not very often used. It is the name given to a superstitious custom prevalent amongst the ancient Greeks. In those old days persons who were seriously ill used to let down a mirror by a thread into a fountain before the temple of Ceres, and looking into the mirror, if they saw a distorted, ghastly face they regarded it as an ill omen, but if the face appeared fresh and healthy it was a token of recovery. A very natural conclusion truly! But what had the dipping of the mirror to do with it?

G. P. (Bishop).—The process of covering glass with an amalgam in order that it may reflect the image is as follows:—On a smooth, level table of stone or iron with a slightly elevated border, mercury is poured in a thin stratum. The mercury is covered with tinfoil, and the glass-plate, previously well cleaned, is slowly slid along the metallic surface so as to exclude air-bubbles. Weights are then placed on the glass to make its contact with the amalgam of tin and mercury more complete. When the amalgam has adhered to the plate, the plate is drawn on its edge to allow the superfluous mercury to drain off. When the amalgam is dry, the process is complete.

ANSWER.—We think your opponents were entitled to the game. It appears they never "called" honours at all, but simply scored them at the end of the game. The passage quoted from Hoyle does not therefore touch the case. The fifth law as given by "Cavendish on Whist" states that honours score last, and it cannot be said that players at long whist when they stand at eight do not score honours. As therefore when you had scored the odd trick you only stood at seven, your opponents were correct in scoring the honours. The question seems to turn on the points that you were only six before you got the odd trick and that honours are scored at long whist when their possessors stand at eight. Following the fifth law above referred to in which tricks are declared to score before honours you yet lost the game.

CHOOSE YOUR FRIEND WISELY.

Choose your friend wisely,
Test your friend well;
True friends, like rarest gems,
Prove hard to tell;
Winter him, summer him,
Know your friend well.

Of bosom companions
Are dangerous things;
Rifing your honey,
But leaving their stings,
Creeping and crawling,
Like bees without wings.

Leave not your secrets
At every man's door;
High tides will shift them,
Like sand on a shore—
Sift them and shift them.

Now higher, now lower:

Take advice charily;

Many a man
Dates back his ruin
To change of his plan.

Choose your friend wisely
And well, if you can.

M. A. E.

BUCK-EYED FLORENCE.—1. The figures of two children asleep in each other's arms which are seen in Lichfield Cathedral are simply a monumental design in memory of some precious little pet who have departed this life. The delineation is the work of the late celebrated Sir Francis Chantrey and is considered to be unmatched for beauty, simplicity and grace. 2. When a young lady has offended her sweetheart she should strive against anything like rashness or impulsiveness. She should, at least, sleep upon it, as the phrase says, and if she could spend a week or two in reflection, so much the better. The return of presents is a conclusive step and should only be adopted after mature deliberation. 3. The general rule of introductions is that the gentleman should be introduced to the lady, that is, her name is uttered last. 4. The lock of hair referred to has not reached us. 5. You will find it more convenient to purchase toothpowder at some chemist's shop than to make it.

LAURA MAY.—The face of the photograph sent for notice is pretty. There is also a counterpoise to the beauty, not merely in the sturdiness of the deportment, but in those indications of shrewdness with which this expressive face is replete. Here certainly is a case in which the will does not suffer the affections to rule; before such a presence the weak points of any lover would be quickly detected and exposed, with a nicely turned sarcasm if the poor fellow should happen to be sentimental. Yet, as perhaps "Laura" would say, if any one worthy of the name of man would propose he would never have cause to regret the step. For what can a man want more than sterling domestic comforts, embellished with some of the prettiness and all the meanness that a good home should contain, the whole being influenced and directed by an unflinching supply of the sound common sense of one

"Who never would answer till a husband could, Or, if she rules him never shows she rules?"

The name, "Laura" is an emblem of victory. We like your handwriting very well.

A. B. C.—The Scottish law concerning the obligations of parent and child to support each other differs from the English law on the same subject. As it appears that you and your son are in different jurisdictions you would probably find a difficulty in getting at him; that is, the process of the Scottish Court against his person would have little or no effect upon him in London. You would also fail, we think, on the merits of the case, for alimony, so far as it can be enforced by Scottish law, is strictly limited to what is necessary for reasonable support. This reasonable support for yourself you appear to possess.

under neither systems of law would your son be liable for the support of your widowed daughter and her three children. As already intimated, in Scotland there exists a direct legal process for alimony between parent and child; but in England the common law seems to have given no means of enforcing this duty; when the parties, however, become chargeable to the parish the statute law has provided that a magistrate can order the goods and chattels of a person liable to the support of his relative to be seized and disposed of towards the support of an individual unable through infirmity, disease or accident to support himself.

R. S.—We have before us no less than four distinct papers from you; two in prose and two in verse. The first is a letter on various ecclesiastical topics written in your usual diffuse style. So diffusely have you written that we are compelled to answer the question in which you ask our opinion "on the subject" by asking "What subject?" If you will be good enough to be definite we will endeavour to reply, that is, if the reply can be given within such bounds as are the limit to an answer. It seems to us that an attempt to reply to your present letter would involve the writing of three essays, one on episcopacy, one on ecclesiastical establishments, and one on what has been called the doubtful virtue of consistency. Such a task under such circumstances we respectfully decline. 2. We rather like the verses entitled "Our Childhood's Home." 3. We do not think so much of "Waiting for His Return," though the attempt to convey a notion of the passionate grief of a woman made in the last stanza is not altogether a failure. 4. In your rejoinder to our notice of your lines on "Beauty and Virtue" you only allude to what may be termed the "fringe" of our remarks. Our observations upon what we deem the root of the matter have been quite passed over by you.

FANNY ISABELLA, nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and high expectations, would like to hear from a handsome young gentleman; one in the navy preferred.

DARK-EYED SARAH, twenty-two, short, passable in looks, amiable, and domesticated, would like to correspond with a steady, respectable young man who is a mechanic or a tradesman.

LOVING MINA, seventeen, medium height, a blonde, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing, and entitled to money on her wedding-day. Respondent must be tall and handsome.

M. J., thirty, 5ft. 8in., a soldier about to retire from the service, and has a little money, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony; a dressmaker preferred.

CHARMING ESTHER, thirty-five, medium height, blue eyes, brown hair, fair complexion, and good tempered, wishes to correspond with a dark gentleman who is able to keep a wife.

C. D., a lady in a good position, wishes to correspond with a gentleman of pious principles. She is twenty-seven, fair, considered good looking, and would greatly appreciate and value a home brightened by the love and affection of a husband.

ARTHUR, a young man of gentlemanly appearance, and a member of one of Her Majesty's cavalry regiments, dark, tall, and handsome, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. She must be about twenty, tall, and fair complexion.

LOVELY CHRISTINA, seventeen, medium height, hazel eyes, brown hair, pretty, good tempered, and has prospects in view, would like to correspond with a nice young gentleman, rather tall and fond of home; a tradesman preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:
A. J. is responded to by—"H. O.," nineteen, dark, and about the same height.

ADA by—"A. B.," tall, a good singer (tenor), rather dark, and fond of dancing.

JAMES P. by—"C. D.," twenty-seven, good looking, musical, and domesticated.

EMMA by—"Bartley," twenty-six, 5ft. 4in., a seaman in the R.N., dark, and good tempered.

ROSEMARY by—"Charlie," twenty-one, 5ft. 7in., dark; and by—"Moss Rose," twenty-two, rather tall, dark, and has a little money.

JACQUES by—"Lonely Lizzie," twenty-eight, brown hair and eyes, fair complexion, considered good looking, loving, fond of home, and thinks she would make a good wife to a loving husband.

J. P. by—"J. S.," twenty-five, medium height, dark, considered good looking, good tempered, thoroughly domesticated, and has had a musical education. "J. S." is an orphan and is very respectable, her friends are all very well connected in business abroad.

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